

A BRIEF  
EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
FIRST and SECOND  
EPISTLES  
OF  
PAUL  
TO THE  
THESSALONIANS

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By the Reverend and Learned  
Mr. James Fergusson,  
Late Minister of the Gospel at  
*Kilwinning.*

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*Joh. 5. 33. Search the Scriptures, for in them ye  
think ye have Eternal life, and they are they  
which testify of me.*

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By the Rev. and Learned  
Mr. James Ferguson  
Pastor of the Gospel in  
Aberdeen.

For the Improvement of the People, and to show the  
Manner of their Conversion, and the Way to  
eternal Life.

Printed by James Macmillan, at the  
Printers Office, in the City of Aberdeen.  
1794.



# To the Reader.

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Christian Reader,

**W**Hen the design of giving the Sense and Use of the Scriptures so briefly as might be, was set on foot by some who looked upon it as very useful for the present and succeeding Generations, the Reverend Author of this piece was prevailed with to take a share in that undertaking; from whom much service of that kind (considering his abilities and indefatigableness in his studies) might have been expected, if (as himself elsewhere intimateth) his papers upon some Books of Scripture had not been destroyed by a sad accident, in the times of our calamity and trouble. Notwithstanding which discouragement, he fell to work again, and did go through the Epistles to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, his Expositions upon which were published in his own life-time:

and left this Exposition upon both the Epistles to  
the Thessalonians ready to be transcribed for  
the press, some time before his Death.

I shall not here insist to give any full cha-  
racter of this Reverend person, who having  
served his own Generation by the Will of God,  
is now fallen asleep and doth rest from his la-  
bours, and who being dead, yet speaketh, by  
the savory effects of his Faith, Love, and Pa-  
tience, expressed in his personal walk and Mi-  
nisterial administrations, besides what his  
publick writings do declare concerning him.  
His Piety, Learning, Prudence and moderati-  
on (and that in very contentious and distract-  
ing times) were not only well known and  
much esteemed in the Congregation where he  
served, and the Province wherein he lived,  
but did render him very famous throughout this  
national Church. Such as conversed with him  
in ordinary, and were acquainted with his  
Studies, did discern more of his Spirit and abi-  
lities than himself was willing to make shew  
of; and were convinced that (beside his abi-  
lities for explicating and applying of the  
Scriptures in this more plain and compendious  
way, and for enlarging and pressing of Scrip-  
ture truths, with solidity and seriousness in  
his ordinary Preaching) he was a man of a  
deep reach, and well fitted for giving of ad-  
vice

vice in perplexed and intricate cases, whereof  
not a few did occur in his time; and (with-  
all) well furnished for discussing of Con-  
verses, and stopping of the mouths of gain-  
sayers; whereof he gave an ample proof,  
when in publick Preaching, he did solidly and  
perspicuously examine and refute those errors  
which of late did infest this Church and Island.  
But (forbearing to write Elogies of him  
whose true worth did set him far above the  
commendation of such a one as I am) all that  
I need to say at this time, is, That as (I  
doubt not) thy acquaintance with what of  
his is already published, will sufficiently com-  
mend unto thee what further of that kind hath  
flowed from his Pen; So I dare assure thee,  
upon unquestionable evidence, that this piece  
is genuine, and the work of Mr. Fergusson:  
The Copy made use of at the Press being tran-  
scribed from the Original written with his  
own hand, and revised by two of his Brethren  
in these parts; from one of whom I received  
it, that I might also read it over before it  
went to the Press. And though I be otherwise  
crouded with abundance of work in my  
present service; yet I have taken some  
time to peruse it, to my own very great sa-  
tisfaction.

It remains therefore (Christian Reader) that

then study how to improve this advantage which (among others) is, by the good providence of God, put into thy hand, lest in a time wherein many means of knowledge do abound, the increase of ignorance, Atheism, and Popery prove a sad plague and snare, and the abuse of Light provoke God to send darkness wherein no man can walk. From which that thou may be delivered, is the Prayer of,

Thy Servant in the

Work of the Gospel,

George Hutcheson.

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A brief

A BRIEF  
**EXPOSITION**  
 OF THE FIRST  
**EPISTLE of PAUL**  
 TO THE  
**THESSALONIANS**

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The ARGUMENT.



*Paul having planted a Church at Thessalonica, the chief City of all Macedonia, Acts 17. 1, &c. he was driven from thence as far as Athens, by the violence of the unbelieving Jews, Acts 17. ver. 5, to 15. And having heard what sad things this Church did suffer from those unbelieving Jews, and also from Pagans, Chap. 2. vers. 15. he sent Timotheus to them, to establish and comfort them, Chap. 3. 2.*

## 2 A brief Exposition of the first Epistle

upon whose return, together with the glad tidings brought by him of their constancy in the doctrine of Christ, Paul doth write this Epistle unto them, Chap. 3. 6, 7. His scope wherein is, partly, by a relation of their Conversion to and constancy in the Faith of his own ministerial carriage when he was among them, and of the solicitous care he yet had of them, notwithstanding of his absence from them, to engage them yet further to constancy and perseverance in the doctrine received for the time to come: Which he labourerth to effectuate in the first principal part of this Epistle, Chap. 1. 2, 3. And partly to incite them unto several duties of an holy life, which he doth endeavour in the second part of this Epistle, Chap. 4. and to vers. 23. of Chap. 5. having at the close of Chap. 4. from Vers. 14. occasionally intermixed a doctrinal truth, concerning the state of believers after Death, and Christs coming to Judgement. And lastly, he concludes the Epistle by praying for them, and commending some things unto their care, from Vers. 23. of Chap. 5. to the end.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.



THE first part of this Chapter contains the inscription of the Epistle, *Ver. 1.* In the second part he propounds and prosecutes a strong motive to perseverance and constancy, to win the esteem he had of their gracious merits from God, to *Ver. 8.* and the general fame thereof in all the Churches, to the end. And more particularly he doth first make entry to this purpose, by giving thanks to God for them, *Ver. 2.* And next he prosecutes it by giving reasons for his thanksgiving. (1.) The cardinal graces of Faith, Love, and Hope, which he observed in them, *Ver. 3.* (2.) The knowledge he had of their Election, *Ver. 4.* (3.) That the Gospel was Preached by him and his associates, in Life and power among them, *Ver. 5.* (4.) The excellent fruits of the Gospel Preached, in making them conform to Christ and his servants, *Ver. 6.* which he amplifieth; first, from this that they became ensamples for imitation unto their nearest neighbours, *Ver. 7, 8.* Next, from the general report and fame of their graces, which had spread it self far and near, *Ver. 8.* which he maketh appear from this, that forraign Churches did give him an account, both how God did countenance his Ministry among them, *Ver. 9.* and of the saving fruits thereof towards them, as was the work of their Conversion, and the final



#### 4 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

that work, evidencing it self in a twofold fruit of their Conversion, 1. Their doing service to God, *Ver. 9.* 2. Their hopeful expectation of Christs second coming; *Ver. 10.*

*Ver. 1.* **P***aul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus, unto the Church of the Thessalonians, which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ: Grace be unto you, and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

**I**N this Verse is the Inscription, declaring, first, who was the immediate Pen-man of the Holy Ghost in writing this Epistle, to wit, *Paul*: together with the joynt asserters, and approvers of the truths contained in it, to wit, two of his associates in the work of the Ministry, while he was at *Thessalonica*; *Silvanus*, the same as it seemeth with *Silas*, *Acts 17. 4.* and *Timotheus* an Evangelist (*2 Tim. 4. 5.*) and of great reputation in this Church, *Chap. 3. 2; 6.* Secondly, to whom the Epistle was directed, who are described from their spiritual state, they were a Church called from the World and Idols, to serve the true and living God, *Ver. 9.* from the place of their habitation at *Thessalonica*, and their relation to *God the Father*, and to *Christ the Son*; in whom they are said to be, because of their worshipping of, and union with God in Christ, whereby the true Church is distinguished from Heathens, and Jews; an union, I say, either external in all visible Church members, or internal also in real believers: See upon *Phil. 1. 1.* *Chap. 6.* Thirdly, The Apostles usual salutation or com-

of Paul to the Thessalonians.

comprecation, whereby he prayeth for *Grace* and *Peace* unto them. See these words explained upon the former Epistle.

Besides what hath been observed already upon the inscriptions of the former Epistles, *Learn, 1.* It is the duty of Christs Ministers not only to endeavour seriously, that a people turn from Idols to God, and that a Church of Christ be set up among them; but also to take notice how the work of God doth afterwards thrive with them, what obstructions are in the way of their progress, and how they may be useful for removing these obstructions, and promoting the work of Grace among them, and to lay out themselves to the utmost accordingly: and this whether they be present with them, or absent from them; for *Paul* having, by the help of *Silvanus*, and *Timotheus*, planted a Church among the *Thessalonians*, did perform the prenamed duties afterwards, even when he was absent from them, as appears by the inscription of this Epistle, *Paul—unto the Church of the Thessalonians. 2.* A Minister of Christ is not alwaies, or ordinarily, to inculcate his own Ministerial dignity and authority upon the people, except when it is evident that his so doing may contribute to advance his masters work, lest otherwise his hearers judge him a man vain-glorious and arrogant, as seeming to be much delighted in reiterating that often, which tends to set forth his own praise, *2 Cor. 3. 1.* For, because (as it seemeth) this Church did not question *Paul's* Apostolical authority, therefore he doth not assert it, nor design himself by it, as he did to other Churches, *Paul unto the Church, &c. 3.* The Spirit  
of

6 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

of the Lord in Christs Ministers makes them of such an humble condescending temper, in order to their gaining ground upon the Lords people, as they will not stand to stoop somewhat below what they are, and to make use of all lawful means and helps which may serve to procure respect unto their message among the people, even of such as are below themselves, and whereof they have no need, except in order to that end: For, though *Paul's* Apostolick authority was sufficient in it self to commend the following truths unto the Church of God, *Gal. 5.2.* yet because his two Associates had great weight among the *Thessalonians*, he doth join them to himself, though far inferiour to himself, that by all means he might procure the more respect unto his doctrine: *Paul and Silvanus, and Timotheus unto the Church.* 4. It is but small advantage unto a people or society that they bear the name of a Church, except they have the marks and characters of a true Church, whereof this is one, that they worship the unity of the God-head in plurality of persons, and acknowledge Jesus Christ the second person in his mediatory office, and that by our union with him we come to be one with the Father: For, all this is implied, while they are said to be in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ; whereby he doth distinguish them from all false Churches, whether of Pagans, who are not in God, but in idols; or of Jews, who worship not a Trinity, nor God in Christ: *Which is in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ.* 5. Even these who have obtained grace and favour from God, have yet need of more grace, for preserving them in

in that state of Grace wherein they are, *Rom. 14. 4.* for encreasing the sense and manifestation of it, *Psal. 51. 8, 12.* for pardoning and subduing those evils, which otherwise might provoke the Lord to withdraw it, *1 Job. 2. 1.* and for enabling them to grow in the graces of his Spirit, that they may in some measure walk suitable to his grace and favour, *Job. 15. 2. 8.* For, *Paul* wisheth for grace even to these *Thessalonians*, a great part of whom were in a state of grace and favour already: *Grace be unto you..* 6. The Lords Ministers, in the entrance of their labours towards a people, would endeavour to have their own hearts really affected with enlarged desires after the peoples good, both spiritual and temporal, that all their pains taken among them flowing from this fountain, and not from base, carnal and selfish motives, *1 Pet. 5. 2.* may be the more acceptable to God, *1 Pet. 5. 4.* pleasant and easie to themselves, as flowing from an inward principle, *2 Cor. 12. 15.* more blessed of God for gaining ground upon the people, *Chap. 2. ver. 7, 8,* with *13.* and the more heartily entertained and accepted of by them; especially, when these enlarged desires of Ministers towards their good are made known unto them, *Gal. 4. 13, 14, 15.* For, therefore doth our Apostle not only labour to get his heart so affected, but ordinarily in the entry of his Epistles maketh so much known unto those to whom he writes: *Grace be unto you, and Peace, &c.*

Ver. 2. *We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers.*

### 8 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

The Apostles scope being to excite those *Thessalonians* unto constancy in the Faith and Doctrine of the Gospel, he doth for this end make known the good esteem which he and his associates had of them, in so far, as they did alwaies, that is, in all their immediate addresses to God, make conscience,

1. Of thanksgiving to God for them all, to wit, because of the graces of Gods Spirit after mentioned, which they in charity, and from some speaking evidences, as it seems, did judge ( for what they knew ) were bestowed upon them *all*.
2. Of praying to God on their behalf, to wit, for constancy and growth in the knowledge of the Gospel, and practice of true piety : So *Chap. 3. 12, 13.*

Hence learn, 1. A begun work of grace in us is then improved aright, when we do not draw an argument for fostering laziness and sloth from it; but are thereby incited to hold fast what is already received, and to seek after more : For, *Paul's* scope is to incite them unto constancy, and further progress, by making them know what thoughts he had of Gods grace already in them, in this and the following Verses : *We give thanks, &c.*

2. We would endeavour so to speak unto others of these saving graces which are in them, as thereby they be not puffed up with conceit; but made in all their richest receipts to see matter of humiliation in themselves, and of thanksgiving unto God : For, therefore *Paul* being to let them know how much he esteemed of their graces, maketh entrie to his purpose; not by setting forth their praises, but by giving thanks to God on their behalf, teaching them to do the like.
3. It is the duty of the Lords people,

people, in their immediate addresses to God, to present the case one of another before the Lord, and to be suitably affected with it; both with their enjoyments, to thank the Lord for them; and with their wants, to pray to God that he would supply them: and especially, a Minister ought to be affected thus to the people *under his charge*, for so was *Paul* and his associates; *We give thanks——making mention of you in our Prayers.* 4. Then do we discharge this duty which we owe one to another, faithfully, when we do it constantly, and alwaies when occasion is offered to approach unto God for our selves; otherwaies our seldom discharging of this duty, doth speak it is not minded seriously, or affectionately. For, *Paul* gives thanks to God *alwaies* for them. 5. Concerning the extent of *Paul's* charity towards them all, so as to take matter of thanksgiving to God from all and every one of them; see upon *Phil.* 1. 7. *doct.* 3. *doct.* 6. As the duties of Prayer and Praise go well together, and do mutually contribute for the help one of another: So we would make such a discovery unto others of the good that is in them, to make them thankful, and set them upon the duty of Praise, as to make them also know there is much good yet wanting, to keep them humble, and to set them upon the duty of Prayer: For, *Paul* doth both these, while he sheweth them he not only giveth thanks for the good they already had, but also prayeth for that which was yet lacking: *Making mention of you in our Prayers.*

Ver. 3. *Remembering without ceasing, your work of*

30 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

*of Faith, and labour of Love, and patience of Hope  
in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and  
our Father.*

The Apostle prosecutes the forementioned scope, by giving reasons of his often thanksgiving to God for them: And first, in this Verse he sheweth that those graces, which he, with his associates, saw kything in them, had left such an impression upon them, that they could not but without ceasing, or when ever occasion offered, make mention of them both to God and men: Of which graces he reckoneth three, in the exercise whereof all Religion doth consist, *1 Cor. 13. 13.* First, Faith, whereby we assent in our understandings to the truth of all Gods Word, *Act. 24. 14.* because of his authority who hath revealed it, *Joh. 4. 42.* and are acted in our will and affections suitable to what those truths do hold out, *Heb. 11. 13.* But do especially rest on Christ for Salvation, that good thing offered in the Promise, *Act. 16. 31. 2.* Love, whereby we wish well to (*Pf. 40. 16. Math. 5. 44.*) and desire to be one with (*2 Cor. 5. 8. Gal. 5. 12.* with *15.*) and do acquiesce and rest satisfied with what goodness and perfection we find in (*Pf. 18. 1, 2. Prov. 16. 13.*) both God and man (especially his Saints) each in their own order, *Math. 22. 37, 38, 39.* 3. Hope, whereby we do firmly expect (*Rom. 8. 25. Phil. 1. 20.*) those good things which God hath promised, and are not yet performed, *Rom. 8. 24.* Next, he amplifies first each of those graces from their effects: To Faith he ascribeth a work, not only because it is the work of Gods

Gods Spirit in us, *Col. 2. 12.* but also because it actually worketh by Love, *Gal. 5. 16.* purifieth the Heart, *Act. 15. 9.* and is an active principle of all good offices which we perform towards God or man, *Rom. 14. 23. Heb. 11. 6.* — To Love he ascribeth *Labour*. The Word signifieth such labour as wasteth and wearieth the Spirit, *2 Cor. 11. 27.* — whereby he intimateth their unwearied industry, wrestling through much discouragement and difficulty, for the furthering the good of Gods Church and distressed members thereof. And to Hope he ascribeth *Patience*, it being Hope in the Lord Jesus Christ, or a well grounded expectation of Eternal Life wrought by Christ, and relying on Christ, which makes the person who hath it Christianly patient, and courageously resolute to endure all hardships he can meet with, until the good thing promised be at last performed, *2 Cor. 4. 16.* with *18.* Secondly, he doth amplify them all joyntly, by their sincerity and soundness, implied in this, that they were studious of those vertues as in the sight of God; see *Gen. 17. 1.* And by the great encouragement they had to that study, from their common and joynt-interest in God as their Father. *Doct. 1.* It is a Christian duty incumbent to all, and especially to Ministers through vertue of their office, to be much taken and affected with the good we perceive in others, so as length of time, distance of place, or multiplicity of other business make us not forget it; and that while we remember it, we do not suppress it, or the deserved commendation of those in whom it is, that so we may thereby prevail both with our selves and others to follow and imi-



12 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

tate it, *Rom. 11. 14.* and especially to bless the Lord for it: For *Paul*, though now at a distance, and much involved in other affairs, both of his own and of publick concernment, doth yet a long time after, alwaies when occasion offered, call to mind and commemorate the graces of God bestowed upon these *Thessalonians*; as a ground of thanksgiving to God, both by himself and others: *Remembring without ceasing.* 2. Then do we rightly remember the graces of God, parts and abilities of others, when the remembrance of them doth not produce discouragement, carnal emulation and envy in our selves, *Numb. 11. 29.* or flattering applause unto those who hate them, *Prov. 24. 5.* but matter of thankfulness to God who gave them: For, as appears from the connexion, *Paul's* remembrance of their graces produceth this effect in him: *We give thanks—— remembring without ceasing.* 3. A real believer may look upon the gracious receipts of others as matter of his thanksgiving unto God, in so far as their receipts do not only commend the giver, *Eph. 1. 3.* but are profitable unto us, as a Copy to imitate, see *vers. 7.* as a ground of encouragement, to expect the like from God to our selves, *1 Tim. 1. 16.* and several other waies: For, *Paul* gives thanks to God for their receipts, *Remembring without ceasing.* 4. The life of a Christian is not a life of idleness, nor a life of ease, nor yet a life outwardly prosperous and free from the cross, his *Faith* must have work, his *Love* must have labour, and his *Hope* must be attended with patience, under the Cross: See more in the Exposition. 5. As inward grace in the heart, where it is

is lively, cannot be hid, but must of necessity kyth in its effects and fruits without; so it is not grace in the naked habit, but grace in exercise, which can yield comfort or encouragement unto the man himself, or matter of thankfulness unto God from others: For, it was the *work of Faith*, the *labour of Love*, and *patience of Hope*, for which *Paul* giveth thanks to God, and from which he doth both encourage and incite them to constancy. 6. Though only God and a mans own conscience can pass a certain and infallible judgement upon his inward sincerity of heart, in the exercise of Christian vertues, *Rom. 14. 4.* yet so much of a mans sincerity may kyth to gracious discerners in his outward conversation and carriage, as will afford sufficient ground to pass a charitable judgement upon him, as one who dischargeth his duty sincerely, and in the sight of God: For, though *Paul* knew not their hearts, yet he doth charitably judge they were sincere in what they did, while he saith, *your work of Faith, labour of Love—in the sight of God.* 7. Then may we charitably judge that a mans external actions are done in sincerity, and flow from an inward root of grace in the heart, when for any thing appeareth, he doth labour to make conscience of all those external duties, wherein the exercise of any Christian grace doth consist, and neglecteth none when God doth call him to it: For, *Paul* from their performing not only the work of Faith, but also the labour of Love, and the patience of Hope, doth judge in charity they had the inward habits of those graces, and did what they did sincerely, and in the sight of God. 8. The Believers laying claim unto,

14 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

and maintaining of an interest in God as his by Covenant, gives much enlargement of heart unto him to exercise his graces, and to carry himself sincerely, and as in Gods sight in all his actions: It is our distance from God, our way-giving unto misbelief, first to question and then to deny an interest in God as ours, which marr the exercise of grace, *the word of Faith*, &c. and in progress of time doth make us not only do less, but also more unbound and less straight in what we do: For, he maketh their *work of Faith*——in the sight of God, to be accompanied with and carried on by this, that God was looked upon as their Father: *In the sight of God and our Father.*

*Ver. 4. Knowing, brethren beloved, your election of God.*

Here is a second reason of their thanksgiving to God, which he doth usher in by two sweet titles he giveth unto them, to wit, of *Brethren* to him, and *beloved of God*, as the words may well be read: see *2 Thes. 2. 13.* And the reason is, the knowledge which *Paul*, with his Associates, had of their *Election* to grace and glory from all eternity by God, as Election is taken, *Eph. 1. 4.* where see in the Exposition; and *Doct. 1, 2, 3.* and it seemeth Election must be taken in that sense here, as appears from a parallel place; *2 Thes. 2. 13.* and not for their effectual calling, though the word be so taken elsewhere, *Joh. 15. 19.* Now *Paul* is said to know their Election, if we mean the Election of this or that man in particular, not according to an infallible judgement

judgement of certainty, for so none without special revelation can know the Election of others, no more than he can infallibly know the secret motions of their heart, which alone do infallibly discriminate the hypocrite from the man who is truly regenerate, 1 *Joh.* 3. 14. and consequently are the only infallible evidences of a mans Election, and therefore he knew their Election according to that judgement, which is over-ruled with charity and grounded upon such evidences as are most probable, though not infallible; such are the external acts of Piety, further than which no man can infallibly see into another, seeing only God searcheth the heart, *Rev.* 2. 23. Although, if we conceive, as it safely may be conceived, that the Apostle doth mean here of the election not of this or that man in particular, but of the whole Church indefinitely and in common, then the knowledge he had of their Election was most infallible and certain, to wit, that not only he knew nothing, as it seemeth, in the contrary to the Election of any of them in particular, and had positive probable evidences, that many of them were elected; but also though he could not take upon him infallibly to condescend upon particular persons, yet he did know assuredly that some among them were elected, seeing God sendeth his Word in power (as he had sent it to those *Thessalonians*, ver. 5.) unto no people, no not to the worst, but where some do appertain to his Election of grace, *Isa.* 6. 13. with 9. and from those some, being the better part, *Paul* (as usually elsewhere, *Rom.* 1. 7.) doth denominate the whole. *Doct.* 1. The work of saving grace in the heart, manifesting it self in a

16 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

mans external actions, is an undoubted mark of his eternal Election; so that according to the evidence, whether infallible or conjectural only, that we have of the former, we may and ought to be the more or less perswaded of the latter. Thus, *Paul* because he had promising evidences, that those saving graces of Faith, Love, and Hope were in them, *Ver. 3.* he doth in this Verse, from charity, judge that they were elected: *Knowing your Election. 2.* Then is the Faith and knowledge of our Election solid, and of the right stamp, when it doth not make us secure, lazie, or to loose the reins to profanity and vice, but stirs us up to greater diligence in keeping the ground we have already gained, and in advancing forward for gaining more: For, the Apostle's scope in the telling them of their Election, is thereby to excite them unto constancy in the doctrine received. 3. The Faith and knowledge of our Election, and that God hath singled us out from others to bestow upon us Eternal Life, may sweeten the saddest of outward dispensations, and make us raise a song of praise to God for that, at least, what ever be his dealing with us otherwaies: For, though this people did labour under sad afflictions, *Chap. 2. 14.* yet *Paul* doth look upon their Election as a ground of thanksgiving to God from him, and much more from themselves: *We give thanks, ver. 3. Knowing your Election.* 4. A gracious heart doth judge it a piece of his highest credit to reckon spiritual kindred unto all who are born of God, and will love them dearly, and carry himself affectionately and affably towards such as are beloved by him. For, because they were beloved by God, they were  
brethren

brethren to him, the latter compellation containing in it the cause of the former.

Ver. 5. *For our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake.*

— Followeth a third reason of their thanksgiving to God, which serveth also for an evidence that there was an Elect people among them; which reason is first propounded, to wit, the lively manner after which he and his associates had Preached the Gospel among them; called *their Gospel*, because they were intrusted to Preach it, 2 Cor. 5-19. and the manner of their Preaching is set down, 1. Negatively, it was *not in words only*, that is, as he explains himself, 1 Cor. 2. 4. *not with the enticing words of mens wisdom*, or varnished over with some fair sophistical flourishes of eloquent language, tending more to amuse the hearers, tickle the ears, and commend the Preacher, than to edifie the judgement, to work upon the affection, and to commend Christ to peoples hearts. Next positively, it was, 1. in power, that is, accompanied with such boldness, liberty, Gospel simplicity, plainness of language, seriousness and fervent edge of affection in the Preachers, as did render the word so spoken, in some measure, apt to work powerfully upon the hearers: For, so doth Paul himself seem to explain what is meant by Preaching in power, 1 Cor. 2. 4, 13. and 4. 19, 20. *Secondly*, Their Preaching was in the Holy Ghost, that is, it was

18 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

confirmed by Signs and Miracles wrought among them by the Apostle and his Associates, as they were extraordinarily assisted thereunto by the Holy Ghost: See the Holy Ghost so taken, *Acts* 19. 2. 3. It was *in much assurance*, whereby is meant that full perswasion above all doubt, which was in *Paul* and the other Preachers, of the truth of what they Preached; so that they spoke not of these truths doubtingly, but confidently, and as of things which they had heard and seen, *1 Joh.* 1. 1. Now that all these three expressions do set forth somewhat in the Preachers, according to the sense given, rather than the effect of their Preaching upon the hearers, spoken of, *ver.* 6. appears from the last clause of this Verse, where he appeals to the consciences of the *Thessalonians*, if they the Preachers had not in all things carried themselves among them answerable to what he presently spoke; and withal sheweth that all that they did of that sort, and that God did by them, was for their sake and good, which doth make the present purpose subservient to the Apostles scope, to wit, that therefore even upon the account presently mentioned, there was ground of thanksgiving to God for them, and that they were bound to persevere in that doctrine, which God had made to be Preached among them in such a lively manner for their good. *Hence learn,*  
 1. That God hath sent the Gospel in life and power unto a people, and given them a lively and powerful Ministry, though but for a season, to sow the seeds of grace and saving knowledge among them. It is no small matter of thanksgiving unto God, both from themselves and others on their behalf, even though  
 their

their faithful Pastors afterwards should by force of persecution be for a time removed from them : The good and fruit of such a Ministry, is not alwaies removed with them, but lasteth after they are gone, *Job. 4. 37, 38.* For, *Paul* doth thank the Lord upon behalf of this Church, that he and his Associates had Preached the Gospel in life and power among them, though they were for the present driven from them : *We give thanks, &c. Ver. 2. For our Gospel came unto you ——— in power.* 2. The Lords usual way is not to send a lively and powerful Ministry unto a place, but where he hath some of his Elect to be converted and saved by that means : For, *Paul* having affirmed, *ver. 4.* that he knew there was an Elect people among them, he giveth this as one evidence upon which that knowledge was grounded, even because God had sent such a Ministry unto them : *For, our Gospel came unto you — in power.* 3. That a people or person may prove constant in Faith and Piety, they would often remember the Love of their first espousals to Christ, with what fervency and seriousness he did bear himself in upon them, how sweet, how lively, how ravishing the glad tidings and report of him in the mouth of his servants were once unto them, and how much they were then convinced of a beauty in truth, and in the feet and carriage of those who did carry the message of truth and peace unto them : The remembrance whereof may stir up some longing desires to find that in Christ, in Truth, and in a sent Ministry, which once they found, at least may render them ashamed to make defection from them : For, the Apostles

remote



remote scope, as we shew, in calling them to mind of the lively manner, wherein the Word was first Preached among them, and how they themselves were witnesses to it, and convinced of it, is hereby to excite them unto constancy and perseverance: *For, our Gospel came unto you---in power.* 4. As there doth usually but little fruit accompany a Ministry, when Ministers do study words more than purpose, and to buse their purpose in such a dresse of words as may set out themselves rather than commend Christ, and tickle the ear rather than edifie the hearer: So where a Minister doth make it his study to get Christ formed in, and ground gained upon the hearts of hearers, and to fall upon such purpose, such words and such strains of utterance and delivery of his purpose from affection, plainness, and holy boldness, as may conduce most for that end; the pains of such a Ministry are usually seconded most by the Holy Ghost, and does afford much matter of thanksgiving to the Lord; for by the former the Gospel cometh in word only, and by the latter it cometh in power also; and *Paul* sheweth that not the former but the latter was accompanied with the Holy Ghost, and looks upon it as a reason of his thanksgiving to God; *For, our Gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power also and in the Holy Ghost.* 5. That the truths of the Gospel were once confirmed by such signs and wonders, as none could work but they who were extraordinarily gifted by the Holy Ghost for that end, may abundantly fix us in the Faith of those truths, it being impossible that the God of truth should ever have set his Seal unto a Lye, *Rom. 3. 4.* For, *Paul* would have them confirmed and constant  
in

in the Faith of these truths Preached by him, because they were confirmed with such signs and wonders, and in the Holy Ghost. 6. The more a Minister be perswaded, and above all doubt, of the truth of what he Preaches, the more he believes and doth therefore speak, and the more he speaks as one who believes, and hath ventured his soul upon the truth which he Preaches, his Preaching will prove the more powerful, and apt to work effectually upon the hearts of hearers: and the more he doubts, the less he believes and is perswaded of these truths which he Preacheth, his Preaching will prove the more warth, lifeless, and coldryf; For, we may look on the third expression, as one ground and cause of what is held forth in the first, their Gospel came in power, because it came in much assurance, or the Preachers did assuredly believe the truths which they Preached; see 1 Cor. 3. 12. Psal. 16. 10. 7. The Lord hath indued his Church, and especially believers in his Church, with a gift of discerning, whereby they may be enabled, in some measure, to put difference betwixt a lively powerful Ministry, and that which is coldryf, dead, and lifeless; betwixt the man who speaks because he believes, and him who though he speak, yet believeth not: In the exercise of which gift, they would not be rash in passing an immediate sentence upon the hearts of Ministers, Col. 2. 23. except in so far as their inward temper doth kyth in their external actions, Matth. 7. 16. They would not be peremptory in passing certain judgement, especially to the worst, upon a doubtful evidence, 1 Cor. 13. 7. Nor yet too open minded, to vent what they judge,

Jam.

22 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

*Jam. 1. 19.* especially, when they can gain nothing by so doing, but the raising of prejudices against a Minister in the minds of others, and consequently the marring of that good, which they were reaping by him. However, that they are indued with this gift is clear from this, that *Paul* appeals to the *Thessalonians*, as witnesses of that power, and much assurance in which he Preached, while he saith, *As ye know what manner of men we were among you.* 8. It is a Ministers wisdom, and a piece of Christian modesty, in speaking to his own commendation, to hold himself most by that for the truth whereof he may appeal to the ears, eyes, and chiefly to the consciences of his hearers; For, so doth *Paul* appeal to their consciences for the truth of what he spoke: *As ye know what manner of men we were among you.* 9. These excellent gifts and graces, and other ministerial qualifications, which Christ bestoweth upon godly and able Ministers, are not bestowed upon them for their own sake, or particular satisfaction and advantage only, or so much as for the behoof of the Church, and especially of the Elect in it; he dealeth the more liberally with Ministers for the sake of those, and therefore they should improve and make use of all their receipts for the good of such: For, *Paul* sheweth that he was enabled to Preach in power, in the Holy Ghost and in much assurance ——— for their sake.

*Ver. 6.* And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the Word in much affection, with joy of the Holy Ghost.

Here is a fourth reason of their thanksgiving to God,

God, which serveth also as an evidence moving *Paul* in Charity to judge all these to be elected of God unto Eternal Life, in whom he had ground to conceive that this here spoken of was verified: And this reason of thanksgiving, or evidence of election is taken from the saving effects of the Gospel Preached upon them; which are first generally proponed, to wit, that in their life and practice they had been followers of, or conformed themselves to that excellent pattern and example held forth unto them by their Preachers, and the Lord Christ. 2. Illustrated, 1. from the necessary antecedent, or moving cause of their so doing, which was their receiving the Word Preached, to wit, in their judgements, by understanding the sense, *Act. 8. 30.* and assenting to the truth of it, *Heb. 4. 2.* and in their heart and affections, by embracing the good things offered by it, *1 Tim. 1. 15.* and subjecting themselves in all things to be ruled by the prescript of it, *Matth. 7. 24. 25.* From an instance of some things wherein they did imitate such excellent patterns, to wit, that as Christ and his Servants had readily Preached the Gospel with much spiritual joy, *Joh. 4. 34.* notwithstanding many hard pressures and afflictions both from men and Devils, *Act. 5. 41, 42.* So they had cheerfully embraced the Gospel, and adhered to it in the midst of much affliction and persecution, unto which they were so far from a base ceding, that they did courageously sustain the dint of it with joy, and a joy not carnal and natural but spiritual, and such whereof the Holy Ghost is Author. *Doct. 1.* Though charity believeth all things, *1 Cor. 13. 7.* and maketh

24 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

a man easie to be perswaded of any good thing in another; yet a Christian ought not to be foolishly credulous, so as to believe things without, far less against, evidence: But his charity in judging ought to be ruled by prudence, so as he believe nothing but upon some probability and appearance: For, *Paul* did not judge them Elect, but upon some evidence, even this, that *they were followers of him and of the Lord.* 2. The way approved of God for attaining the Faith of our own Election, or a charitable perswasion of the Election of others, is not to dive in immediately and at the first step upon the secrets of Gods decree, as if we had stood in his counsel, *Jer. 23. 18.* But by way of discourse and reasoning to collect and conclude, that God hath elected us or others, from the work of saving grace, and the effects of that work kything in us or them: For, the Apostles scope here, as I shew, is not only to give an additional reason of his thanksgiving, but also an evidence, from which he did conclude their Election, from the fruits and effects of saving grace in them: *Ye became followers of us and of the Lord,* saith he. 3. It is the duty of Christians, and such as being made conscience of, doth strongly favour of a gracious change in them, to propound unto themselves for imitation, not the example of a multitude to do evil, *Exod. 23. 2.* but of those in whom they observe the most eminent evidences of a work of saving grace: For, the Apostle doth mention this as a matter of their commendation, a reason of thanksgiving to God on their behalf, and as an evidence of their Election that they did imitate him, and his Associates:

*And*

*And ye became followers of us, saith he. 4. As* there would be something worthy of imitation in the life of a Minister, besides his plain, painful and elaborate Preaching, otherwise his naughty life may destroy more than his Preaching can save, seeing all men are more addicted naturally to be guided with example than with precept, *Gen. 42. 16.* and with an ill example rather than a good, *Gal. 2. 13.* So it is the duty of people not only to lend an ear to their Ministers doctrine, but an eye to his pious life and conversation, that the same instructions being inculcate, both upon the ear by his doctrine, and their eye by his example, they may work upon their hearts and lives the more effectually: For, both these are implied while *Paul* commends them from this that they did imitate their Pastors: *And ye became followers of us. 5.* The most gracious of Christians, whether they be private professors, or publick Ministers, are not to be followed absolutely, and in all things, but in so far as they are followers of Christ, whose example is the rule and measure of all examples, and is to be followed absolutely, and without reservation in all his moral actions, wherein he intended to cast us a Copy, *Matth. 11. 29.* For, *Paul* mentioneth their following of the Lord in the last place, as that which did bound and set the just limits unto their following of men: *Ye became followers of us, and of the Lord. 6.* Such power is there in the Word of God when it is received, that is, understood, assented unto and embraced, and especially when the word of promise is by Faith received, and improved both for pardon of sin, and subduing of it, *Act. 15. 9.*

that

that it works a mighty change in the receivers of it, makes them quit their wonted guides, the course of this world, the Prince of the power of the air, and the lusts of their flesh, *Eph. 2. 2.* and give themselves up to follow the examples of men most eminent in gracious practice; in so far as they are followers of Christ. Neither can any gracious change of this kind be expected in them, until the word be thus received by them: For, *Paul* makes their receiving of the Word a necessary antecedent of their following of him and Christ: *Ye became followers of us and of the Lord, having received the Word.*

7. As persecution and affliction from men, incited by the Devil, *Rev. 2. 10.* that inveterate enemy of mans Salvation, is the common lot of those that embrace the truth; so it is not sufficient to prove a man Elected of God, or that a real work of grace is wrought in him by God, that he embrace the truth under a fair Sun-shine of prosperity attending the professors of it, except besides other evidences, he be at least content and ready to undergo the utmost of affliction and persecution he may meet with for his profession; nor yet that he imitate Christ and his Servants in pleasant, profitable, and creditable duties, except he also imitate them in promptness of mind to carry a cross for a truth; and to undergo other duties which are more expensive, unpleasant to the flesh, and liable to shame and disgrace before the world: For, *Paul* doth evidence their Election not from their following of him and Christ in any duty, or from receiving of the Word simply, but from their receiving of it in much affliction.

8. Neither yet is it a sufficient proof of a gracious

a gracious work in the heart, that a man do embrace some piece of a suffering lot for Christ; an hypocrite may endure somewhat before he change his way, *Gal. 3. 4.* There must be at least a readiness of mind to undergoe much affliction; yea the utmost that Satans malice and power can reach unto: for Paul doth instance their praise-worthy imitation of Christ and his followers in this; *They received the word in much affliction.* 9. Neither is it yet sufficient that a man endure much affliction and variety of crosses for the Gospels sake, if so he do it droopingly, and because necessity drives him to it, an hypocrite may suffer much on that account, *1 Cor. 13. 3.* There must be also a cheerful frame of spirit under suffering; for, saith he, *ye received the word in much affliction, with joy.* 10. Neither is it yet sufficient that a man endure affliction with joy, except it be a joy of the right stamp, and whereof the Spirit of God is the author, a joy arising from spiritual grounds, such as, that the least grain weight of the bitter gall and wormwood in our cup is measured out by the hand of Providence, *Luk. 12. 6, 7.* which turneth all things about for good, *Rom. 8. 28.* that by much affliction we are made like our master, *Phil. 3. 10.* that by our sufferings the Church of God is edified, truth is confirmed, *Phil. 1. 7.* and aliens made to enquire after it, *Phil. 1. 13.* and that if we suffer with him, we shall also reign with him, *2 Tim. 2. 12.* A real hypocrite may attain to a carnal, natural joy in suffering, arising from natural grounds, such as a mis-application of rich promises made unto sufferers,



28 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

ferers, as if they did not suppose the grace of faith in him who suffers, *Phil. 1. 29.* and an ambitious desire to leave behind him the name of constancy, and of being a martyr and sufferer for a truth; 'tis not this latter, but the former joy which makes a lively frame of spirit under the cross: for, saith he, in much affliction, with joy of the holy Ghost.

Ver. 7. *So that ye were ensamples to all that believe in Macedonia and Achaia.*

The Apostle doth inlarge what he presently said, of their courage, patience, and cheerfulness in receiving the truth, and adhering to it, in the midst of many pressures and afflictions; first, from this, that not only their whole Church in general, but almost all the members thereof in particular, were so many ensamples and lively patterns, to wit, for their patience, cheerfulness, courage, constancy (which he implied to have been eminently in them, *v. 6.*) and for their other Christian virtues, unto all believers, which were either in *Macedonia*, their own Nation, *Act. 27. 2.* or in the bordering Nation of *Achaia*, *Act. 19. 21.* Doct. 1. Then are Christians praise-worthy for the grace of God in them, and their graces a speaking mark of their election, both unto themselves and others, when they do not rest upon the smallest measures, but by growing in grace do, from a principle of holy emulation, labour to outstrip others, even those who were in Christ before them: for, *Paul* by way of thanksgiving,

giving, v. 2. (whereof the purpose of this verse may be lookt upon as an additional reason) commendeth the grace of God bestowed upon the *Thessalonians*, as a speaking mark of their election, v. 4. from this, that through reason of their growth in grace, they were *ensamples unto all who believed in Macedonia and Achaia*. 2. Such may be the conceitedness of old professors, of their measure of grace already received, *Luk. 15. 28, 29.* such may be their undervaluing of others, *Act. 21. 28, 29.* provoking the Lord to withdraw his influence in a good measure from them, *Luk. 18. 14.* and such may be the edge of zeal in new beginners, *Gal. 5. 7.* and the fresh sense of mercy newly received by them, *Gal. 4. 15.* occasioning the Lords dispensing more of his special influence to them, *Jer. 2. 2, 3.* that the former may be far outstripped, as to growth in grace, by the latter, and those who were last may become first: for, though some of them, at least, in *Macedonia* (namely the Church at *Philippi*, *Act. 16. 12.* with *17.*) were converted to Christ before the *Thessalonians*, yet in a short space the *Thessalonians* became *ensamples unto all who believed in Macedonia and Achaia*. 3. Though there should be an holy emulation and strife among Christians, who can advance in the way of piety, with greatest diligence, *Heb. 10. 24.* yet those who are outstripped, would not, yea need not, be carnally emulous or envious at those who are before them, seeing the progress of one is the benefit and advantage of another, in so far as the outstripped Christian hath a new incitement and encouragement to duty,

from the example of those who are further advanced than he is: for, those *Thessalonians*, having outstripped all who believed in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, became ensamples to them. 4. It adds the more matter of commendation unto a Church, when not only their external Church state, being exactly framed according to the prescript of Gods word, becometh an imitable pattern for other Churches besides, but when also particular Church members do so walk in the practice of all Christian vertues and duties suitable unto that state, as that each of them, for the work of saving grace shining forth in them, becomes a laudable pattern for others to follow: for, *Paul* commendeth the *Thessalonians* not so much from this, that their whole Church in general was an ensample, but almost all the members thereof were so many ensamples, and lively patterns to be followed by others: So that *ye were*, not an ensample, but ensamples. 5. As the merciful Lord, besides the word of truth pointing out the way of our duty, hath thought it necessary to furnish us with the examples of others, who have trod in the path of duty before us, that so we may know our duty to be feazible, seeing men subject to the like infirmities, have already practised it, *James* 5. 17. and the neglect of duty to be the more hazardous, seeing all who have walked in the way of duty before us will be made use of as witnesses against us, *Heb.* 11. 7. and 12. 1. So the same Lord hath thought it fit to provide us with variety of such examples, whereof some are more some less eminent, that they who are discouraged to follow eminent examples, as despairing ever to

come

come near their copy, may take unto them courage and heart to imitate those whose examples were of lesser note and magnitude: for, not only Christ and the Apostles were patterns to be imitated by those of Macedonia and Achaia as well as by those of Thessalonica, v. 6. but the Thessalonians also are held forth for ensamples to them: ye were ensamples to all that believe, &c.

Ver. 8. For from you founded out the word of the Lord, not only in Macedonia and Achaia, but also in every place your faith to God-ward is spread abroad, so that we need not to speak anything.

In this Verse he doth first clear what he spoke, v. 7. by shewing how they became such imitable patterns to their nearest Neighbours, to wit, because the Gospel, here called *the word of the Lord*, as being revealed by him, and having the Lord Christ for the main subject whereof it treateth, 1 Cor. 2. 2. because, I say, the Gospel was propagated by them and founded out from them as with the noise of a Trumpet (for the word in the original beareth so much) towards those Regions: which must not be understood of the first publishing of the Gospel in those places, it being clear that the Gospel was Preached, at least in *Philippi* by Paul himself, before that time, *Act. 16. 12.* but of a reiterated report of it, which made the Gospel in a manner fresh and new unto them, because of these excellent effects wrought upon the Thessalonians by it, and reported of joyntly with it: which report as it seemeth was carryed by those of Thessalo-

32 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

*Thessalica*, who did usually traffick and keep commerce in those Regions. Next he doth further amplifie what he mentioned of the fruits of the Gospel among them, v. 6. from that general fame of their eminency in grace, and especially in the grace of faith in God, which was spread abroad beyond the confines of their nearest neighbours, in Regions where they themselves had no commerce, yea in every place, to wit, where *Paul* did travel, as the last clause of the verse doth clear, where he sheweth the fame of their graces was such in all these places, that there was no necessity for him to speak any thing, as to the giving of information; they were already made so notorious unto all. *Doct. 1.* It is the duty of all who live where the Gospel is preached, to carry a good report of Christ and the Gospel, both by their word and work, into all places where they do resort, if so they may thereby allure others with whom they converse to think well of Christ, and embrace the Gospel, which maketh an offer of him: for, the publishing of the Gospel in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*, here spoken of, was chiefly by means of such *Thessalonians* as did traffick in those places: for, from you sounded out the Word of the Lord. 2. There is not any one thing which maketh the Gospel sound louder, the sound of it to be heard better, and its offer embraced more readily, than when a sound profession is beautified, adorned, and seconded by sober, sincere, painful and conscientious practice: for, it was such a profession seconded with such a practice in these of *Thessalonica*, which made the Gospel sound from them in *Macedonia* and *Achaia*: The word

word signifies to sound shrill, and far, as with the noise of a Trumpet, or voice of a Lyon-herald. 3. It tendeth much for giving credit to the Gospel far and near, that great Cities and honourable personages do once receive it; for, *Thessalonica* was the chief City in all *Macedonia*, where were many women of credit and note, *Act.* 17. 4. and therefore upon their receiving the Gospel, the word of the Lord did sound out in all *Macedonia* and *Achaia*. 4. There is nothing more ordinary for God, than to out-wit the Devil and his most witty instruments, in so far as what is intended by them as the most probable mean to destroy the Gospel, the Lord doth make it tend to the further spreading of it: for, therefore doubtless did Satan and his instruments raise so hot a persecution against the Gospel in *Thessalonica*, *chap.* 2. 14. because they thought the noise of that ill usage which the Gospel did meet with in that prime City, spreading far and near, would scare others from embracing it, and yet the Lord makes the very same thing, to wit, the spreading report of the cruelty of persecutors, together with the report of constancy in believers, a mean of spreading the Gospel far and near. In every place, saith he, your faith to Godward is spread abroad. 5. Though the grace of faith be rooted in the heart, and cannot be immediately seen, yet whereever it is, it cannot long be hid, but needs must discover it self by the external fruits, which follow upon it, and flow from it: for, the fame of their faith did spread abroad by manifesting it self in its fruits. 6. The Lord doth give a name for faith and piety, beyond others,

34 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

unto some in mercy, that thereby they may be the more engaged unto perseverance and constancy, and so to walk answerably unto their name, as knowing that the more famous they are, the more will be expected from them: for, he mentioneth this of the general fame that was spread of their graces in all the Churches, as a strong motive unto constancy, which, as I shew, is the scope of all his purpose in the first part of the Epistle. 7. It is a piece of a Ministers duty, in relation to his flock, as to press conscience making of duty upon them, 1 Tim. 6. 17. rebuke them sometimes sharply, Tit. 1. 13. yea and to complain of them, both to God and man for palpable neglect of duty, Isa. 49. 4. So to commend them also unto others, even to strangers, for the good that is in them, that thereby they themselves may be the more encouraged in their duty, Chap. 4. 9, 10. and others provoked to follow them in that which is so praise-worthy, 2 Cor. 9. 2. And that God (the Author of all good, James 1. 17.) may hereby get glory, 2 Cor. 8. 16, &c. for, while Paul sheweth he had not need to speak any thing to the commendation of the *Thessalonians*, their fame was spread so generally among the Churches, he implyeth, it was his usual way whereever he came, to commend the graces of God in such, among whom his Ministry had been effectual.

Ver. 9. *For they themselves shew of us, what manner of entering in we had unto you, and how ye turned from God to Idols, to serve the living and true God.*

Paul

Paul doth here make the truth of what he presently spoke appear, That the fame and report of their graces was so generally spread in all places, that he needed not speak any thing to their commendation: And he makes it appear from this, that they themselves, that is the forraign Churches among whom he conversed, were able to give him a perfect account of the Gospels progress among the *Thessalonians*, and more particularly they did give him an account of two things; The first relates to *Paul* himself and his associates; to wit, what manner of entrance they had to *Thessalonica*, whereby he doth not mean, that either they had entred that City, or were received by it, in any great pomp or worldly state; The History *Act. 17. 1, &c.* sheweth the contrary; But he thereby expresseth their own ministerial carriage, and the Lords countenancing of their Ministry among that people, spoken of briefly, *v. 5.* and more largely, *Chap. 2. v. 1. to 13.* The second thing whereof those forraign Churches did give *Paul* an account, relateth to the *Thessalonians*, and the fruit of *Pauls* Ministry among them, to wit, 1. Of the work of their conversion, and turning unto God from their Idols, or false Gods, whom they did formerly worship; which work of turning to God consists in the exercise of faith and repentance, as appears from *Isa. 55. 2.* with 7. where coming to God, forsaking of sinful wayes, turning to the Lord, are spoken of as expressing pieces and parts of one and the same thing. 2. Of the sincerity of this work, evidencing it self in a twofold end or fruit of their conversion, the first whereof is in this verse, to wit,



wit, their doing service to God set forth by two epithets, to distinguish him from Idols. 1. He is the living God, who hath life in himself, *Job. 1. 4.* and is the author and preserver of life unto others, *Act. 17. 28.* in opposition to their dumb and lifeless Idols, as Sun, Moon and Stars, which the Gentiles worshipped, *Psal. 135. 13, &c.* Next he is the true God, The word in the Original doth not so much expresse his fidelity and that truth, which he sheweth in performing what he speaketh, (In which respect he is also the true God, *Mat. 5. 18.*) as the truth of his being and nature; he is really and truly God, in opposition to another sort of Heathen Idols, which though they were not lifeless as the former, but possible men or spirits, yet they were not true, or really Gods, but by nature no Gods, *Gal. 4. 8.* *Dolt. 1.* It is the duty of Christians to inform themselves, so far as possibly and conveniently they may, how the work of God doth thrive in forraign Churches, as being members of the same body, *1 Cor. 10. 17.* and that thereby they may have matter of rejoycing in God, *Chap. 3. 6, 7.* and imitation for themselves, *2 Cor. 9. 2.* when things go well, and of fellow-feeling with Christs afflicted members, *Heb. 13. 3.* and wrestling with God on their behalf, *Heb. 13. 18, 19.* when it is otherwayes: for believers far and near, had informed themselves so well of the state of the Church at *Theffalonica*, that they were able to give *Paulan* account of it: for, they themselves shew of us, saith he. 2. It is the duty of Christians, not enviously to suppress, but cheerfully to publish the deserved commendation of others, and the praise

of

of Gods glorious grace manifested to them beyond their neighbours, even though we should thereby seem to darken our own reputation being compared with theirs : for, so did these other Churches cheerfully publish the deserved praises of the *Thessalonians* : *They themselves shew of us* : The word signifies to declare a thing boldly, freely, and with good will, as Ambassadors do return their answer from forraign States. 3. Whatever praise-worthy grace is among the Lords people, it is ordinarily conveyed unto them from the Lord by means of a publick Ministry, so that a people cannot well be commended, except the Minister whom God hath made instrumental for their good, be in some respect commended also ; And therefore for a people to boast of their graces received, and to trample underfoot the reputation of a faithful Ministry, by whose means they were bestowed, is most absurd, and in point of reason inconsistent : for, those believers being to set forth the praises of the Church at *Thessalonica*, begin with the commendation of *Paul* and his associates, who were their Ministers and by whose means they were converted. *They shew what manner of entring in we had unto you, and how*, to wit, by that mean ye turned to God. 4. As all men are by nature averse from God, with their backs upon him, and full of enmity in all the faculties of their soul, *Rom. 8. 7.* and members of their body, against him, *Rom. 6 — 19.* So there is alwayes somewhat which every man naturally is turned unto, and doth set up to himself in Gods stead, by giving unto it the chief and choice of his affections, which are Gods due : for, while it is said  
they

they turned to God from Idols, it implyeth that they were turned away from God, and addicted to their Idols. 5. Where ever the Gospel is powerfully accompanied with the Lords blessing, to bring about a work of saving grace in a sinner, there will be a turning from, and abandoning of whatsoever did keep that place in the heart which is due to God, whether Idols properly so called, when Divine Worship is purposely given to any thing, under any respect, besides the true God, *Exod.* 32. 5, 6. with *1 Cor.* 10. 7. or improperly, when, though not the outward worship, yet the inward respect and honour, such as the measure of love, joy, confidence, or fear, due to God, is given to the Creature, whether it be a mans belly, *Phil.* 3. 19. or his wealth, *Eph.* 5. 5. for, it was mentioned of these *Thessalonians*, that they had turned from Idols, as a fruit of the Gospel powerfully preached among them. 6. It will not prove a powerful and gracious work of the Gospel upon a mans heart that he forsake his Idols, except he also turn to God, and bestow upon him that inward respect, external worship, pains and diligence, which he did formerly give unto them; Otherwise, if he only turn from a greater degree of Idolatry to a lesser, or from all Idolatry to practical Atheism, or if he quit a false Religion, and turn wholly irreligious and a meer Nullifidian, he doth only change his service but not his master, he serveth Satan and some one or other of his own lusts still; for, it is mentioned of them as an evidence of a gracious work among them, they had turned from Idols to God. 7. Though the Lord alone, without any actual concurrence

concurrence of our free-will, doth at first regenerate us, by creating gracious habits and principles of a new life in us, *Ezek. 36. 26.* (who then are dead in sins and trespasses, *Eph. 2. 1.* and consequently can contribute nothing towards our own quickning) yet in the after progress of the work of grace, we are not wholly patients, but from a principle of Grace in us, *2 Tim. 1. 6.* we do also work, being first acted and wrought upon by God, *Cant. 4. 16.* for, saith he, *ye had turned to God.* The word is of an active signification. 8. Then doth a sinner turn sincerely from sin to God, when he devotes himself wholly to God as his Lord and sovereign, to do him worship and service according to the prescript of his word, *Math. 5. 9.* Idle flatterers have not sincerely turned to God: for, as a mark of their sincerity in turning, it is mentioned, they turned to God *to serve the true and living God.* 9. In our doing service to God, we should carefully labour to take him up in those his Divine properties and glorious attributes, by which he hath made himself known to us in his word, that so the known worth of him whom we do serve, may make his service lovely; and our service given unto him to be accepted of by him, as being performed to that God whom Scripture revealeth to be God, and not a to mishapen deity or fancy of our own brains: for, it is mentioned of them in their giving service to God, they took him up as the *living and true God*, to hearten them in his service, and to distinguish him from dead Idols and false Gods: *To serve the living and true God.*

Ver. 10. *And to wait for his Son from Heaven, whom he raised from the dead, even Jesus which delivered us from the wrath to come.*

Here is a second thing wherein the sincerity of their conversion did make it self evident, which is first propounded, to wit, their patient waiting for, and hopeful expectation of, the eternal Son of the eternal Father, his second coming from Heaven to Judgement. 2. The grounds of this their hope and expectation are unfolded, in a description of Christ, first, From his Resurrection from the dead, by the power of the Father, so that though he was once dead, he is now alive; And therefore their waiting for his second coming was not without ground. 2. From his Office, whereby, as in the mean time he doth deliver in part, so at his second coming he shall compleatly deliver us, saith *Paul*, that is, all sincere believers (as he was) from the wrath to come, that is, the punishment, woe and vengeance due to all mankind for sin, *Eph. 2* — 3. and which he shall fully execute at the last day upon all unbelievers, 2 *Thes. 1*. 7, 8, 9. and therefore they, to wit, believers, had good ground to expect his second coming, and good by his coming. Hence learn, first, several marks of sound conversion, or of a sincere convert. 1. He doth so turn to God and give him service, as he looks upon God with an eye to Christ, whom he serveth equally with the Father, and through whom he approacheth to the Father, *Joh. 14*. 6. as to a God reconciled, whose Justice is satisfied and his wrath appeased through him,

him, *Matth. 3. 17.* for, it is mentioned as a mark of the sincerity of their conversion, that as they turned to serve God the Father, *v. 9.* so they also gave divine honour to his Son, by hoping in him, waiting for him, and looking to him as an interposer betwixt them and the dint of Gods deserved wrath: They turned to wait for his Son— which delivered us from the wrath to come. 2. A sincere convert doth turn to God to give him service not for a start, and season only, with a purpose to return to his Idols, when he pleaseth, but to continue constant in his service so long as he liveth, and ever while Christ come to loose him from it: for, the word rendred *to wait*, signifieth to remain constant, and so doth point at their patient continuance in the service of God. 3. A sincere convert can never rest satisfied with his present receipts, or with any thing he can enjoy upon earth, his expectation and hopes do carry him beyond time, to look for Heaven, for Glory, a life of light, and joy to be bestowed upon him by Christ, when he cometh to judge the world: for, waiting for Christs second coming is mentioned as a fruit and consequence of their sincere conversion: *And to wait for his Son.* 4. A sincere convert is one to whom ( especially when in a right temper ) Christs second coming ( although it be abhorred by wicked Atheists, *Act. 24. 25.* yet ) is not terrible, but a thing hoped for, and much longed after: for, they turned to wait for his Son. 5. A sincere convert will not ( when in a right temper ) quarrel with God, because his promises want a fixed date, or, their performance is delayed, but makes it his work to keep himself constantly

constantly in a suitable frame, as if they were to be performed presently, and yet to wait upon Gods leisure with contentment until his time come to perform what he hath promised: for, their waiting on Christs second coming implyeth both these, a keeping of themselves in a posture ready for it, and a patient on-waiting on Gods leisure so long as it is delayed: *And to wait for his Son.*

*Secondly,* We may learn hence, divers doctrinal truths concerning Christ wherein the Apostle had doubtless instructed the *Thessalonians* at greater length, but doth now propound them in most wonderful brevity, As, 1. That Jesus Christ is true God: for, he calls him the Son of the Father, and therefore of the same substance with him, even God himself: *To wait for the Son of God.* 2. He is also man: for, it is implied he was once dead, and therefore he behoved to be also man, *whom he raised from the dead.* 3. Though he have two Natures, yet he is but one person: for, he speaks of the Son of God and him who was dead, not as of two, but as of one and the same: *for his Son whom he raised from the dead.* 4. Jesus Christ at his Fathers appointment, *Psal. 40.* hath undertaken to be a Saviour, Redeemer, and Deliverer of the Elect from that wrath which is due to them for sin: for, therefore is he called *Jesus*, which signifies a Saviour, *Matth. 1. 21.* and is said to *deliver us from the wrath to come.* 5. Jesus Christ the Lord of life did give himself to death, thereby to satisfy provoked justice for the sins of the Elect: for, it is implied he was dead, while it is said, *whom he raised from the dead.* 6. Jesus Christ having satisfied the

the Fathers justice by his death, was loosed out of prison, raised up from death, and absolved by the Father, as having performed all he undertook : for, *he raised him from the dead.* 7. Jesus Christ after his Resurrection did ascend to Heaven, to take possession of it in name of the Elect, *Eph. 2.* and to make application unto the elect of all these good things which he had purchased by his death, *Act. 5. 31.* for, that they looked for him *from Heaven*, saith he is there, and consequently that he ascended thither. 8. Jesus Christ in his bodily presence doth now reside in Heaven, and not upon earth ; for, there he resides whence he is expected to come : *And to wait for his Son from Heaven.* 9. As Jesus Christ did deliver the elect from the wrath to come, by paying of a sufficient ransom to provoked Justice in his death : So he is carrying on, while he is now in Heaven, the work of their delivery towards perfection, by making application of the redemption purchased, both to pardon sin in its guilt, and to subdue sin in its strength, *Act. 5. 31.* for, the word *delivered* in the Original, may be read in the present time, as well as the preterit, *who delivereth us.* 10. Jesus Christ shall again return from Heaven, and come to Earth at the last day, to judge the quick and the dead, *2 Tim. 4. 1.* for, his coming is waited for by believers, and therefore it must be : *to wait* for his coming. 11. Then, and at that time, shall Jesus Christ complete the work of the Elects delivery, from that wrath to come, by acquitting them openly, and pronouncing, as their Judge, that blessed sentence, *come ye blessed of my Father*, *Matth. 23.* for, so much is implied,



while his delivering of us from the wrath to come is annexed to his second coming: *Look for his Son* — *who delivereth, or delivereth us from the wrath to come.* 12. Jesus Christ the Judge shall not then acquit or deliver all from that wrath, but only such who here have lived by faith, and fled to him for a refuge, and laid hold upon the ransome payed by him: for, saith he, who delivereth *us*, to wit *Paul* with the believing *Thessalonians*, and such believers as they were, leaving all others to drink the dregs of that most bitter Cup of Gods unmix-ed wrath for ever and ever, *Joh. 3. 36.*

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## CHAP. II.



**I**N the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle doth further incite them to constancy and perseverance, by a relation of his Ministerial carriage to *ver. 13.* and of the success of his Ministry among them to *ver. 17.* which he doth summarily propone, *viz.* that his entrance unto them was not in vain, *ver. 1.* which he proveth: 1. From his holy boldness, to Preach among them notwithstanding great apparent hazard, *ver. 2.* Secondly, from the sincerity, both of his doctrine and of his own heart, in preaching it, *ver. 3.* which latter he doth further clear, first, from his great aim to please God, *ver. 4.* Secondly, by clearing himself of three vices opposite to sincerity, to wit, flattery, and covetousness, *ver. 5.* and affectation even of that glory which was other-  
ways

wayes due unto him, *ver. 6.* And thirdly, by shewing he was of a meek and amiable deportment among them, as of a nurse to her children, *ver. 7:* which he proveth, first, from that ardent desire, he had to do and suffer the utmost for their spiritual nourishment, and this only from love to them, *ver. 8.* Secondly, from his labouring unto weariness, to prevent their burthen and expence, *ver. 9.* Thirdly, from his Christian example which did shine before them, *ver. 10.* chiefly in the duties of his particular calling, *ver. 11, 12.* After this, he relates the great success his Ministry had among them, *ver. 13.* evidenced by their constancy in suffering, *ver. 14.* and hence, doth take occasion to set forth the Jews, their Godless persecutions in their vilest colours, *ver. 15, 16.* In the second part of the Chapter he doth further pursue his main scope, by convincing them of his intimate affection to them, while he excuseth his long absence from them, first, from his earnest desire and purpose he had to see them, *ver. 17:* Secondly, from his reiterated enterprize to fulfil his purpose, wherein Satan had hindered him, *ver. 18:* The reason of which his desire and enterprize was that high esteem he had of them, and accession of glory he looked for at the great day, as a fair reward of his pains among them, *ver. 19, 20:*

VER. 1. **F**Or your selves, brethren, know our entrance in unto you, that it was not in vain.

8 The Apostle being, in order to the further incitement of these Thessalonians unto constancy in the doctrine received, to put them in mind of the dignity of his Ministry, and of his own sincerity in the discharge of it among them, doth here propone a brief sum of all he hath to say to that purpose, to wit, that his entrance in unto them, that is, his undertaking of that employment to Preach the Gospel among them, and his carriage in that employment, *was not in vain*, That is, was not, 1. rashly undertaken, without a call from God, nor 2. discharged by him perfunctoriously, or in a vain shew, but in sincerity: Nor yet 3. was it without fruit among them; for the following purpose, which serveth as a commentary to this verse, doth shew that the vanity which he removes from his entrance to them must be extended to all those: Besides the force of the word will bear so much, that being a vain thing, or done vainly, which is done rashly or without a warrant from God, which is done with more of vain shew than of real solidity and sincerity, and which being done hath no effect or fruit. And for the truth of this assertion he appeals to their own conscience and knowledge, and thereby doth also confirm the truth of that report, which he shewed, Chap. 1. 9. was spread among the forreign Churches concerning his manner of entring in unto them, as appears from the causal particle *for*.

Hence

Hence *Learn*, 1. This may, and in reason should, commend the love of truth unto a people, and make them constantly cleave unto it, that truth hath been preached unto them by Ministers sent from God for that very end, whose life and practice have preached unto them as well as their doctrine, and whose pains and travel hath been blessed of God among them, to their own discerning: for, the Apostles scope in this first part of the Chapter, by a narration of his call from God to preach unto them, of his Ministerial carriage among them, and of the fruits of his labours towards them, is to incite them to constancy and perseverance in the doctrine received. 2. That others do report well of us, and that our name, and fame, for the graces of God bestowed upon us, be fragrant among many, is then a mercy when our own Consciences can bear testimony that there is some ground and reason for it; otherwise to have a name that we are living and yet be dead, increaseth our guilt, and proveth a snare, *Rev.* 3. 1. for, the Apostle, having shewn *chap.* 1. v. 8. how well they were reported of by forreign Churches, doth here imply that they themselves knew there was reason for it: *for your selves know*, &c. 3. It is not enough that a Minister be well reported of among strangers for sincerity and diligence, except he do approve himself to the Consciences of his hearers, so as he may appeal to them for the truth of what strangers do report of him; for, Paul appeals to the *Thessalonians* themselves about the truth of that which forreign Churches reported of his entry unto them: *for your selves know our entrance in unto you*. 4. Where a Minister is

48 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*  
called of God, and carryeth himself sincerely and  
faithfully in his calling, his Preaching and other  
pains do very rarely, if ever, want fruit, either  
sooner or latter, *Joh. 4. 37, 38.* either manifest or  
secret, *Joh. 14. 42.* for, *Pauls entrance unto them*  
*was not in vain*; that is, as was expounded, not  
without a call from God, not in vain shew, and  
without sincerity and diligence, and therefore it  
was not in vain, without fruit.

*Ver. 2. But even after that we had suffered before,*  
*and were shamefully intreated, as ye know, at*  
*Philippi, we were bold in our God to speak unto*  
*you the Gospel of God with much contention.*

He doth here prove his entrance was not in vain,  
mainly as to the first thing (though not excluding  
the other two), which I shew was pointed at in  
that expression, to wit, that his undertaking of that  
employment was not rashly, but at Gods appoint-  
ment. One convincing evidence whereof was that  
he ventured upon it over the belly of such discour-  
agements and disadvantages, as no wise man with-  
out a call from God would ever have set his face  
against. And first, he mentions what sufferings in  
his body, and disgraceful injuries against his repu-  
tation and credit, he had sustained for Preaching  
the Gospel a little before he came to them, as they  
themselves knew, in their neighbouring City of  
*Philippi*, where he was most injuriously and shame-  
fully used: See *Act. 16. 22, 23, 24.* And next he  
shews that all his sufferings of that sort were so  
far from making him shrink, that notwithstanding  
them

of Paul to the Thessalonians.

them all, he took the boldness, being furnished thereunto by Gods grace and assistance, (and therefore it is called *a boldness in God*) to Preach the Gospel publickly, concealing no necessary truth, without all base fear of flesh (as the word rendred *we were bold* doth imply) and that in *Thessalonica*, the prime City of all *Macedonia*, where were most Jews, enemies to the Gospel, and therefore he might in all probability have expected to incur as much hazard there, as in any place else, which the event did verifie, for as he shews in the close of the verse, he Preached there with much contention, the word signifieth combating or fighting, to wit, both by disputing with, and suffering from his malicious opposites, which contention, together with his boldness here spoken of, is clearly held forth, *1. Thess. 2. 17.* from v. 1. to 10. *Doct. 1.* Though a mans courageous venturing upon probable, or certain sufferings doth not it self alone prove his doctrine to be truth, or his calling from God to Preach that doctrine, *Matth. 23. 15.* yet, when other more firm arguments are not wanting, taken from the Doctrine it self, the mans Ministerial carriage, the success of his pains among the Lords people, that other taken from his constancy and courage in suffering, joyned with them doth not want its own weight: for, *Paul* joyneth this of his courage in suffering with other arguments which follow, to prove his entrance was not in vain, that is, his doctrine and calling were from God: *But even after that we had suffered before, we were bold, &c.* 2. That a Ministers pains may not be without fruit, and in that respect vain among a people, he should

make Conscience to deliver his message with freedom and boldness, so as he omit no necessary truth for fear of flesh, *Act. 20. 26.* and in an authoritative way make through application of general truths (by rebuking, comforting, exhorting, reproving) to the several ranks of hearers, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* without which a mans Ministry doth for the most part prove but coldryf, dead and lifeless: for, the Apostle mentions this of his boldness to speak, or freedom and boldness which he used in speaking; as a reason why his entrance was not in vain or without success: *But ——— we were bold in our God so speak;* 3. As a suffering lor doth usually attend sincere and faithful Ministers; So it often falls out that they meet with most of trouble and suffering at the close of some notable piece of service done to their master Christ; Satans malice is hereby more provoked, *Act. 16. 18; 19.* and God giveth way to his malice then, to teach his servants that their reward is not to be expected here, *Act. 14. 19.* with 22. and to divert them, by this humbling exercise, from being transported with lofty thoughts of themselves, arising from their great success, *2 Cor. 12. 7.* for, Paul did suffer much, and was shamefully intreated at Philippi, immediately after he had erected a Throne and Church for Christ in that place, *Act. 16. 12.* with 19. 4. Where Grace is lively and vigorous, or where habitual grace is quickned by present influence from God, and when duty is sweetned by the faith of an interest in God who doth enjoin it, afflictions, crosses and sufferings for well doing will be so far from quenching zeal, that they will rather inflame

it: for, though *Paul* had suffered much before in *Philippi*, yet he was bold to Preach at *Thessalonica*, being assisted by God, and having his interest in God as his own made clear, which is pointed at in the expression, *we were bold in our God*. 5. A Minister or any other should so commend himself, and the good that is in him or done by him, when necessity puts him to it, *2 Cor. 12. 11.* as that he make the result of all to be his ascribing the praise and glory of all unto God: for, *Paul* doth so commend his own courage and boldness, as he gives God the praise of it: *we were bold in our God*, or by the help and assistance of our God. 6. Trouble and tryal bypast doth not exempt from trouble in time to come. Every new duty almost is attended with some new tryal and difficulty, (See the reasons upon Doct. 3.) for, though *Paul* had suffered much a little before at *Philippi*, yet he meets with new troubles here: *to speak unto you the Gospel of God with much contention*.

Ver. 3. *For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile.*

He adds a second argument to prove his entrance was not in vain, mainly, as to the second thing I shewed was pointed at by that expression, to wit, that he did not discharge the imployment of Preaching the Gospel among them perfunctoriously, or in a vain shew, as seeming to do much, but in effect doing nothing. And that his entrance was not so in vain, he proveth, both from the sincerity of the doctrine preached, and of his own heart in Preaching it: where



where first, he calls his Preaching of the Gospel his exhortation, not only because his doctrine was consolatory to the afflicted (for the word signifieth also consolation) but also, and mainly, because all his Preaching did end in pithy application by exhorting them earnestly, humbly, and affectionately (as the word also doth bear) to cleave and walk according to the truths, whether doctrinal or practical, which were delivered by him. Next he removes from his Preaching three opposites of sincerity, the first two whereof point at the sincerity and incorruptness of his doctrine, 1. It was not of *deceit*, or of insnaring and seducing errour, as the word signifieth, that is, It was not fitted to the corrupt opinions of men, as the Preaching of the false Apostles was, who mingled the Law with the Gospel, to eschew the hatred of the Jews, *Gal. 3. 11.* 2. It was not of *uncleanness*, that is, it was not fitted to countenance men in their vice and filthy lusts, as the preaching of the false Apostles was, *Jude v. 10, &c.* The third doth point at the sincerity of his own heart in Preaching, his exhortation was not *in guile*, that is, he did not deceitfully seek his own worldly advantage from them, under a pretext of seeking Gods glory in their salvation, as he more fully declares, *v. 5, 6.* *Doct. 1.* It is sincerity and faithfulness in a Ministers carriage that breeds him much trouble, strife and suffering from his carnal hearers, who cannot well comport with Ministers, except they so preach as to please their humour: for, the purpose of this verse, holding forth *Pauls* sincerity, may be lookt upon as the occasion of his trouble spoken of, *v. 2. for our exhortation*

*tion was not of deceit.* 2. The most effectual way to convince others of sin who are guilty, or at least to render them inexcusable, is to make our carriage reprove them, by holding forth in our life and practice a lively copy of such virtues as are contrary to their vices: The voice of a mans work doth pass further than of his word: for, it may be very probably conceived that the Apostle in avowing his sincerity, and purging himself of the vices mentioned here, and in the verses following, hath an eye to the false teachers, who were guilty of these evils, and whom he doth hereby reprove: *for our exhortation was not of deceit.* 3. It's inexcusable boldness, daring presumption, and such as argues him, who is guilty of it, an unsincere, rotten-hearted hypocrite, when a man doth purposely wrest the word of truth, to give some seeming countenance unto the erroneous opinions, or loose licentious practices of such whose hatred he would decline, and whose favour he would gain: for, to prove that his entrance was not in vain, or his carriage was not unsincere, he saith, *his exhortation was not of deceit or of uncleanness,* implying, if it had been so, he would have been a gross hypocrite. 4. When a man doth bend his wit to patronize error in opinion, he will at last prove no great unfriend, but a secret favourer of profanity and vice: for, so much is implied, that if his exhortation had been of *deceit*, it would have been of *uncleanness* also. 5. It is not sufficient that a Minister do not wrest truth, but Preach the sincere word without mixture, except he also Preach it sincerely, with a single eye to Gods honour, and the salvation of his people, with  
our

out any allowed to look towards base or by-ends : for, *Paul* thinks it not enough to remove corruptness from his doctrine, except he also purge himself of insincerity in the delivery of it, while he saith, *not in guile.*

*Ver. 4. But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, who trieth our hearts.*

The Apostle having removed from himself the opposites of sincerity, *v. 3.* doth here positively affirm, that his behaviour in his Ministry was sincere, whereof he gives this one instance, That his design in Preaching, and in all the other pieces of his Ministerial employment, was never to please the sinful humours of men, but to approve himself unto God, and to be approved of him : And he gives two reasons inducing him thereto. 1. The consideration of that rich favour, and the conscience of that great trust put on him by God, who having *allowed* him, or approved and judged him fit, as the word signifieth, did intrust him with the Gospel, or concredit the publick dispensing of it unto him. 2. The consideration of Gods omniscience, who knows the heart, *Jer. 17. 10.* makes enquiry into the heart and passeth sentence upon men according to their heart, *1 Sam. 16. 27.* *Doct. 1.* The sin of man-pleasing cannot stand with sincerity and pleasing of God in any man, and least of all in a Minister : (See in what respects a Minister should and may please man without sin, and in what respects not, upon *Gal. 1. 10. doct. 6.*) for, he gives that as an instance

instance of his sincerity, and study to please the Lord, he *spoke not as pleasing men but God.* 2. It is one of Satans great designs, to possess the minds of people against the most faithful of Christs servants, with strong suspicions that though there be nothing blame-worthy in their external walk, they may yet be guilty of inward abominations, as of pride, hypocrisie, covetousness, unstreightness, and such like, because he knows that as nothing marreth the edification of people more than rooted prejudices of that kind against their Ministers, So that though honest Ministers may justly deny the charge, yet they cannot so easily demonstrate to the prejudged party their own freedom from the guilt charged, there being alwayes somewhat in the best actions of most innocent men that may by an uncharitable and prejudged on-looker be constructed to spring from some of those bitter roots; and therefore the servant of Christ should labour not only to keep himself free of those evils, but also from doing any thing which may savour of them, or give unto people any just occasion to conceive that he is tainted with them: for, *Pauls* clearing himself of those inward abominations, here and in the preceding and following verses, implyeth that some did suspect him guilty, and that he walked so as he might justly clear himself that he was free of them, *even so we speak, not as pleasing men.*

3. Then do we walk sincerely, when, as in every other thing, so especially, in the duties of our particular calling we labour to please, and to approve our selves unto the Lord, to wit, by doing not only what he commands, *Rom. 12. 2.* but also

in the manner which he prescribes, *1 Cor. 10. 31.* and especially, by seeking after and resting satisfied with his approbation of what we do for matter and manner, without stepping one hair breadth off the road way of duty, for catching applause or approbation of man: for, *Paul* gives this as an instance of his sincerity, that, in the duties of his particular calling as a Minister, he did labour to please God, or approve himself unto him: *even so we speak; not as pleasing men but God.* 4. As the ministerial calling is of any other the greatest trust, there being no less concredited to the person employed in it than the Gospel of Christ, and the souls of his people, *Heb. 13. 17.* so none should be intrusted with that weighty charge, but such as after tryal are found in some tolerable measure fitted for it: for, *Paul* sheweth he was, when made a Minister, *put in trust with the Gospel*, and this after he was allowed of God, the word signifieth proved and judged fit, which implyeth not that he had any fitness of himself, but the Lord, of unfit, did make him fit, *Gal. 1. 18.* and did then intrust him with the Gospel. 5. There is not any thing prevails more strongly with an ingenuous and gracious heart to make him in all things please the Lord, than the serious remembrance of his rich receipts from him, and how much he stands a debtor to Gods free grace and favour on that account: for, *Paul* makes the mercy manifested by God in making him a Minister, a reason why he studied in all things to please him: *But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak.* 6. It is a speaking evidence of a Ministers call

call from God, when the conscience of his calling  
prevaileth with him to order himself in all the  
pieces of his imployment, both for matter and man-  
ner, as that he may approve himself to God who  
hath called him: for, the conscience of *Pauls* calling  
prevailed so with him: as we were allowed to be  
put in trust — even so we speak not as pleas-  
ing men, but God. 7. As God who knoweth the  
heart doth chiefly judge of mans actions according  
to that frame of heart wherewith he doth discharge  
them; So then do we know and believe that it is so,  
when our faith and knowledge of it doth make us  
in all our actions take such inspection of the heart,  
as that for our inward sincerity we may approve  
our selves unto him who tryeth our hearts: for,  
the knowledge of this truth did so work upon *Paul*,  
while he saith, we speak as pleasing God, who try-  
eth the hearts.

Ver. 5. For neither at anytime used we flattering  
words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness,  
God is witness.

The Apostle doth here remove from himself and  
his Ministry two other vices, which are inconsistent  
with that single hearted sincerity that ought to be  
in a Minister; and hereby doth also meet with the  
false Apostles, who were tainted with the vices fol-  
lowing: first, he used not *flattering words*, that is,  
speeches fitted to please the carnal corrupt humours  
of men, for gaining of favour or some reward  
from them: The word in the original is taken from  
another, which signifieth meat, implying, that  
flattery

flattery is a base belli-god vice, whereby the flatterer becomes a slave to every bodies humour for a piece of bread: And for his freedom from this vice, he appealeth to their own knowledge, who might easily judge of his words, whether they were flattering or not. 2. He used not *a cloak*, or pretext, of *covetousness*, that is, neither was he avowedly covetous, or inordinately desirous of worldly gain, neither did he make a scug, pretext, or cloak of piety, or of any laudable vertue to cover any such covetous desire, as the false Apostles did, *Rom.* 16. 18. And because men could not so well judge of his freedom from this sin as from the former, seeing it is usually hid under some specious pretext, therefore he appealeth unto God to judge, and bear witness, whether he spoke truth or not. *Doct.* 1. The sin of flattery, at least when given way to and allowed, cannot consist with the Grace of sincerity (as in no man so much less) in a Minister: where a man inflaveth himself to please the sinful humours of people, and upon any terms not to irritate them, he will not spare to wrest the truth of God to make it subservient to his base design, by strengthening the hands of the wicked and promising him life, *Ezek.* 13. 22. for, *Paul* denyeth that he used flattering words, as inconsistent with that sincerity formerly spoken of, which appears by the causal participle *for*: *for, neither at any time used we flattering words.* 2. Though flatterers be deep dissemblers, and bend their wit to make all men believe they respect and love them, when they but seek to prey upon them, *Prov.* 29. 5. yet a man of understanding will easily discern them: And it argues  
either

ther great stupidity, or blind self-love in the man who when he is flattered to his face, knoweth it not, but taketh foulest flatteries for real praises; for, while he appealeth to themselves to judge if he used flattering words, he implyeth they might easily have discerned his flattery, if he had been guilty of it: *for, neither used we flattering words, as ye know.* 3. There is not any sin more unbecoming to, nor inconsistent with sincerity in, a Minister, than the sin of covetousness. The man who is enslaved to it will make his gain of all things, if it were by making merchandise of Christ himself, *Matth. 26. 15.* of truth, *1 Tim. 6. 10.* and of a good conscience, *Micah 2. 2.* for, Paul doth clear himself of covetousness, as inconsistent with that sincerity formerly spoken of: *for neither used I — a cloak of covetousness.* 4. The sins of flattery and covetousness go oft together, The covetous wretch is of such a servile temper, as to make his tongue a Trumpet to sound out the praises of all by whom he may have the least advantage, even though he know there be no real worth in the person whom he so commends: for, Paul insinuates so much while he purgeth himself from both these vices joyntly: *for neither at any time used we flattering words, nor a cloak of Covetousness.* 5. As foulest sins have of times fair pretences. So there is not any sin that folk desire more to keep under a cover than the sin of covetousness. It is so base a sin, that though it have many favourers because of the advantage it bringeth with it, yet no man doth willingly seem to be guilty of it, or is content to be upbraided with it: for, he sith no,



he used not covetousness, but a cloak of Covetousness, Because it is often coloured over with some pretext. 6. Though fair pretences may cover foulest sins from the eyes of men, yet not from the eyes of God, in whose sight all things are naked and uncovered; He not only perceives the sin which lyeth hid from man under a specious pretext, but doth so much the more detest it that it dare disguise it self and appear in a pious dress: for, his appealing unto God to judge if he used a cloak of covetousness, implyeth, that no cloak or pretext could hide his sin from the eye of God: *God is witness.* 7. That Christians under the New Testament may take an Oath: and upon what conditions, see upon *Gal. 1. 20.* *Dott. 3.* for, *God is witness*, is the form of an Oath. See the exposition of *Gal. 1. 20.*

*Ver. 10.* *Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burthen some, as the Apostles of Christ.*

He doth here remove another vice from himself and his Ministry, to wit, his seeking of glory: whereby is meant, 1. more generally his affecting even of that glory and respect which was due unto him. And 2. more particularly, which agreeth best with the latter part of the verse, a rigid exacting of honourable maintenance, which goeth under the name of *glory*, because it was a just testimony of his honour and dignity, and an acknowledgement of his superiority over the people, *Heb. 7. 4.* And first, that he may purge himself both from ambition and

and greediness, he denyeth that he was guilty of seeking glory, in either of those respects, whether from them, or from any other, while he was with them; for though he received maintenance from the *Philippians*, even while he was at *Thessalonica*, yet he did not rigidly nor coverously urge it, *Phil. 4. 16, 17.* Next, he amplifieth his freedom from those two vices by this, that as to the point, especially, of his not pressing upon them for honourable maintenance, he did thereby remit of his right, seeing *as an Apostle of Christ*, or, by virtue of his Apostolick office, he might have been burthensome and chargeable unto them, to wit, by exacting maintenance from them, for the same word is rendred chargeable, and made use of in this sense, *v. 9. Doct. 1.* As we are not bound to reject that lawful respect and reverence which is due to vertue, and to those who are indued with it, where we have the offer of it; So for a man to hunt after respect and esteem, as his main design, or to seek it eagerly, doth savour of vanity, and should be far, especially from a Minister, as he would not be found in the least to seek himself more than Gods honour, and the good of souls: for, he saith not, he did not receive glory, only he did not seek it: *nor of men sought we glory.* 2. The sin of covetousness consists not only in our seeking more of things worldly than we have a right unto, but sometimes also in a rigid exacting of that which is our right; and this especially in a Minister, when his so doing may prove a stumbling block unto others, and one way or other mar the progress of the Gospel among a people: for, though

62 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

Paul had a right, as he here doth shew, unto honourable maintenance, yet he did not exact it, lest it should have marred the Gospels progress, 1 Cor. 9. 12. and this he gives as an evidence of his freedom from covetousness: *nor of men sought we glory* ——— *when we might have been burthensome.*

3. That worldly maintenance is due from a people unto Ministers, See upon Gal. 6. 6. Doct. 4. and here the Apostle doth assert it, while he saith, *when we might have been burthensome as the Apostles of Christ.* 4. It is not enough to know what lawfully may be done, except we also consider what, in respect of circumstances, is convenient to be done: Circumstances do alter much the nature of an action, and make that which is in it self lawful to prove unlawful, at least inconvenient, and so sinful at such a time: for, the Apostle knew it was lawful to exact his maintenance, yet finding it was not convenient in that time and place, he doth forbear: *nor of men sought we glory, when we might have been burthensome, &c.*

Ver. 7. *But we were gentle among you, even as a nurse cherisheth her Children.*

The Apostle having already commended his Ministerial carriage among them, by avowing his freedom from such vices as are inconsistent with that single hearted sincerity which ought to be in a Minister, he doth now begin to commend it further, by condescending upon some virtues, the exercise whereof was eminent in him. And first, in general, he sheweth that he was gentle, that is, of a meek

meek and amiable deportment, doing all duties toward them from a principle of love and delight (as some derive the word in the original from another which signifieth delight) and drawing them on to do what he required, not so much by rigid boasting and constraint, as by meek perswasion and word-speaking (for the word comes from another which signifieth to speak) and he saith he was *gentle among them*, whereby he shews he carried himself not as a superiour, but as an equal, as one of them, and to all of them, and in the midst of them as the word signifieth. And in the latter part of the verse he illustrates this his gentleness and meekness, from the tender affection and care, not of a mercenary nurse, but a nursing mother, who dimits her self to the meanest and basest of offices, for the more warm and tender education of her children, The grounds of which similitude are in the following verses. *Doct. 1.* It is not enough that a Minister of Christ abstain from such scandalous sins of flattery, greed and ambition, as time-servers are guilty of; but he must also labour for the exercise of such vertues as may commend his Ministry, and gain respect for him in peoples consciences: for, *Paul*, besides his freedom from such vices, doth shew that his conversation was adorned with the exercise of several praise-worthy graces, in this and the following verses: *But we were gentle among you.* 2. The Lords Ministers are not, under pretence of eschewing base flattery, to carry themselves too austere, retiredly, and much less indiscreetly: As they should not flatter men in any known sin, so neither censoriously carp at every small thing,

wherein is no offence neither to God nor man : Both of which extremities must be eschewed, and Gods way, which lyeth betwixt the two, followed : They should so please all men to edification, *Rom. 15. 2.* as to flatter no man in what is really sinful ; They should so discountenance known sin in any man, *1 Tim. 5. 20.* as to be of an amiable discreet and gaining carriage towards all men : for, *Paul* having cleared himself of base flattery, *v. 5.* sheweth here that he was of a meek and amiable deportment among them : *But we were gentle among you.* 3. So ticklish are people to be wrought upon in order to their spiritual good, that a Minister who would prevail with them must study their humours, and let himself to digest many provocations, and to comply with their temper, yielding unto them all contentment in all things, so far as he safely may with a good conscience ; He must even become all things to all men, that he may save some, *1 Cor. 9. 22.* for, *Paul* implyeth that he did all this, while he saith, *we were gentle among you.* 4. There is somewhat of tender affection, and of care and diligence flowing from affection, in a nursing mother towards her own Children, which is exemplary and cannot well be imitated by any other ; And therefore mothers whom God hath made in all other respects fit to nurse their Children themselves, should not, without some pressing necessity, deprive their little ones of their motherly care, by putting the charge of them upon another : for, *Paul* implyeth so much while, being to set forth the height of his affection towards these *Thessalonians*, he doth use the similitude, not of a mercenary nurse,

but

but of a nursing mother, as is clear from his calling the Children whom she cherisheth her own: *Even as a nurse cherisheth her children.* 5. It is not so much to be regarded what pieces of duty a Minister doth discharge to a people, as with what affection and heart they are discharged by him; and a Minister who would have his pains facilitated unto himself, and blessed unto the Lords people, should labour to put on towards them bowels of compassion, and a kind of natural tenderness of loving affection, such as is in a father or mother towards their babes; Or if there be any affection more tender than another, he should endeavour to put it on, and express it, in seeking after their spiritual good: for, *Pauls* affection was such as is in a nursing mother towards her own children.

Ver. 8. *So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us.*

The Apostle doth give, in this and the following verses, five grounds of the former similitude, all and every one of which doth prove his meek and amiable deportment among them, as being so many branches of it. And 1. as the nursing mother, if she be but for a little time absent from her children, doth most vehemently long to see them, that she may give them the breasts and other food convenient for them: So *Paul* was affectionately desirous of them; It implies a vehement desire after them,

them, and speaketh (as it seemeth) the ardency of desire he had, while he was busied with his handy labour, v. 9. and they with theirs, to have the Congregation again convened, that he might preach unto them. 2. As the nursing mother when she comes to her children hath an unspeakable delight to feed them with food convenient, and with her own blood now turned to milk: So, *Paul* was willing, or had such an inexpressible delight and pleasure (for so the word signifieth) not only to feed them spiritually, and to impart the Gospel to them by his Preaching, but also, for their through confirmation in the truths preached by him, to impart unto them, or for them, his very soul, that is his life (so called usually, 1 Sam. 24. 11. & 26. 21. because the presence of the soul in the body is the cause of life.) Now this gradation here used, from his imparting the Gospel to the imparting of his life, implyeth not, that the Gospel is of less value than a mans life, but that it is more difficult, and speaketh greater affection in any, to lay down his life for others, than to impart the Gospel to them. 3. As the only reason which moveth the nursing mother to do all, is motherly affection to her children, and no hope of gain: So was it with *Paul* even because they were dear unto him, or beloved by him. The words so expounded hold out several pieces of a sweet frame of spirit, most necessary for a Minister: And first, he should be so disposed, as to be ever in a readiness to close with any opportunity that providence doth offer for gaining of souls to God, yea and to thirst after opportunities of that kind, when one way

way or other they are withheld : for, thus was it with Paul, he did vehemently long to have the Lords people convened, that he might Preach to them : So being affectionately desirous of you.

2. Whatever he doth in the several duties of his calling, he should do it not of constraint, or with a kind of reluctancy, for the simple exoneration of his Conscience, and to stop the mouths of those whom he seareth may otherwise challenge him,

1 Pet. 5. 2. but from an inward principle of delight, and hearty good liking to his work : for, Paul was acted from such a principle, we were willing, or had an inexpressible delight and liking (as the word signifies) to have imparted the Gospel to you.

3. The choice text wherein he should delight most to discourse and preach of, should be the glad tydings of salvation, to lost sinners, through Jesus Christ a Redeemer : for, so did Paul : we were willing to have imparted to you the Gospel, or the glad tydings of salvation as the word doth signifie.

4. He should be forecasting what the faithful discharge of his message may cost him, what hazard, loss, or suffering he may be put to for it ; and resolving, come what may come, never to shrink from his duty : for, Paul did forecast, it might cost him his life, and resolveth to quit it : we were willing to have imparted to you not the Gospel of God only, but also our own souls.

5. He should be so disposed, as to be in a readiness to seal the truth preached by him with his blood, and thereby to confirm and strengthen the Lords people in the faith of it, Phil. 2. 17. if God shall call him to it : for, so was Paul ——— to have im-

parted



*parted unto you our own souls.* 6. He should labour to have the Lords people so much endeared to him and beloved by him, that whatever he do unto them, or suffer for them, may flow from affection and love to them: for, so was it with *Paul*: *We were willing to have imparted to you — because ye were dear unto us.*

*Ver. 9. For ye remember, brethren, our labour and travel: for labouring night and day, because we would not be chargeable unto any of you, we preached unto you the Gospel of God.*

Here is a fourth ground of the similitude, to wit, that as the mother, who is poor and destitute of her husbands help, doth labour night and day that she may have wherewith to sustain her self, and thereby enable her for sustaining of her children: So doth the Apostle speak of his own diligence here, and thereby confirmeth what he spoke of his affection to them, *v. 8.* as appears by the causal particle *for*, while he saith they did remember, or at least might remember first, more generally, his *labour and travel*: The first word in the original expresseth labour unto weariness, and the second labour after weariness, so that when his body was wearied he did not give over, but made to work again. And next more particularly,

1. His uncessant diligence in his labour, he laboured night and day, to wit, so much of that time as might be spared from his necessary refreshments by meat and sleep.
2. The matter of his labour, partly expressed in Preaching the Gospel, partly implied

implied in his handy-labour, by making tents to maintain himself, *Act. 18. 3.* 3. The end why he did so labour, that he might not be chargeable nor burthensome, neither to the whole community, nor yet to the private estates of any particular person among them : and this, as it seems, because, for some reasons not mentioned, the success of the Gospel would have been otherwise retarded among them, as it would have been at *Corinth* if *Paul* had exacted stipend from them, *1 Cor. 9. 12.* though it was not so in other Churches where *Paul* exacted his right, *2 Cor. 11. 8. Phil. 4. 14. Doct. 1.* Where there is entire and ardent love in the heart, either to God or man, it maketh any piece of service done unto them or for them, though otherwise never so burthensome, to be but light and easie ; for, because they were dear to him, *v. 8.* therefore doth he willingly undergo no small labour and travel for them : for ye remember brethren our labour and travel. 2. It is the duty of people to call to mind, and not to forget the great pains and labour that Ministers have been at for bringing about their spiritual good, that so they may not only be thankful to God, who hath stirred up any to lay their otherwise perishing condition so near to the heart, and acknowledge their obligation to instruments who have willingly spent themselves for their sake : but also may thereby learn to value the worth of any spiritual good which they have received, labour to maintain and improve it, seeing their enjoying of it hath been the fruit of so much diligence and pains : for, *Paul* implyeth it was their duty to remember, while he saith, ye remember

remember brethren, our labour and travel. 3. It is the Lords allowance and command that men of most eminent parts and greatest esteem should submit themselves to the meanest and most toilsome of employments, for purchasing a mean of livelihood and subsistence, rather than that they should close with any sinful course, or use unlawful means for that end : for, here *Paul*, a great Apostle, being straitned for a livelihood, doth *labour night and day* in that mean employment of making tents, *Act. 18. 3.* 4. Though Ministers are not to be entangled with the affairs of this life, *2 Tim. 2. 4.* and ought to give themselves wholly to the duties of their calling, so as they be not turned aside from them by unnecessary diversions, *1 Tim. 4. 15.* yet in case of necessity and want of maintenance, otherwise occasioned either by the extream poverty or profane unthankfulness of the people, he may use some handie labour to maintain himself and his family, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* and yet not cease from preaching the Gospel : for, *Paul* a Minister of the Gospel, in this case of necessity, did *labour night and day*, and *preached unto them the Gospel of God.* 5. There is no ground here from *Pauls* practice to establish Popish works of supererogation, or good works, (which as they say) are not commanded, but done over and above duty : for, *Pauls* abstaining from taking maintenance was no such work ; It was his duty in the present case (however he had sufficient right to it otherwise, *v. 8.*) seeing by taking of maintenance he would have retarded the Gospel, and therewith the glory of God and spiritual good of his neighbour,

1 Cor. 9. 12. for promoting whereof he was bound by both tables of the Law ( *Matth. 22. 37, 39.* ) to do whatever was in his power; and therefore in this case it was not a work over and above duty.

Ver. 10. *Ye are witnesses, and God also, how holily, and justly, and unblameably, we behaved our selves among you that believe.*

This verse may be taken as a fifth ground of the similitude, to this purpose, That as the godly nursing mother doth not only nourish her children with milk and other meat, but also endeavours to live among them Christianly, that their tender age be not corrupted, but rather edified by her good example: So Paul did not only feed the *Thessalonians* spiritually by preaching the Gospel, but also made his Christian life and holy practice shine before them, while he behaved himself holily as to God, in the duties of his worship, and justly as to men, and in all his dealing with men, and ( which followeth upon the former ) unblameably or without complaint, so as ( though God might justly tax him, 1 *Joh. 1. 8.* yet ) man could shew no reason for which to blame him: And he saith, he behaved himself thus *among those that believe*, the word may be rendred to *those that believe*, implying, that in his leading an holy life, next to Gods glory, he had respect to their good, that they might be edified by his good example. And for the truth of all this, he appealeth both unto themselves and God as witnesses; To them, as witnesses of his out-ward

ward conversation, and to God, as witness of his inward sincerity. *Doct. 1.* As it is the duty of all, and especially of Ministers unto their flocks, to walk before them in the good example of an holy life, otherwise they cannot choose but destroy more by their unministerial walking than they can build up and edifie by their most excellent and Orthodox Preaching: So it is a singular mercy unto a people when God gives them such a Minister, as even his very life and carriage doth Preach unto them: for, *Paul's* life was thus exemplary for piety before the *Thessalonians*; and he doth speak of it as a mercy from God unto believers among them: *ye are witnesses saith he, how holily — we behaved our selves among you, or to you that believe,* implying that his living so was much for their behoof: and he saith, *how holily —* to shew his carriage was singularly and eminently holy, and not according to the ordinary strain only. 2. Then is the life of a Christian, and especially of a Christian Minister, such as it ought, when he hath respect to all the Commandments, as well to those of the first Table by living holily to God, as of the second by living justly towards men: for, so did *Paul*: *how holily and justly we behaved our selves.* 3. It concerneth all men, and chiefly Ministers, to carry themselves unblameably, and so as neither men have just reason to complain of them, nor they be too querulous and much in complaining of their own lot measured out unto them by God, or of every unkindness they may receive from the people of their charge; There being no rank of people which hath the eyes of more upon them, and whose escapes

escapes do more incapacitate them to do good in their station, and whom the Lord doth more earnestly call to the exercise of patience, without all seeming to repine, than those of the Ministry: for the word in the original rendred *unblameable* doth signifie *without complaint*, and that both in an active and passive sense, that is, so that we do not much complain of others, and that others have not reason to complain of us: *how unblameably we behaved our selves.* 4. No man may need to expect he

can so walk as that none complain of him, or be displeased with him; It is sufficient for a good man in order to his peace, that he do so behave himself as he give no occasion of complaint unto any, and that those who are really gracious do approve of him; But as for those who are yet in their unrenewed state, a man may expect that the more Christianly he doth walk, he shall be reproached the more and spoken evil of by such, 1 *Per.* 3. 16. for, taking the words as they are here rendred *among you that believe*, Paul doth thereby imply, he was not free of blame from all, but only from believers among them. 5. That a man do live a truly pious

and Christian life, it is not sufficient that he discharge all the external duties of the first and second table, with such exactness that the sharpest sighted of men cannot justly tax him; but he must also make Conscience of inward and spiritual duties, and that he do what he doth in single-hearted sincerity, from such motives, and for such ends, as God approveth, and whereof only God himself is witness, otherwise the more that a man do in the external duty he is the more refined and self-de-

ceiving

ceiving hypocrite: for, *Paul* made conscience both of external and internal duties, as it appeareth from his taking men to witness of the former, and God to witness of the latter: *ye are witnesses and God also, &c.*

*Ver. 11. As ye know, how we exhorted and comforted, and charged everyone of you, (as a father doth his children.)*

He doth here prove that his life was such among them as he presently spoke of, and thereby shews somewhat further of that laudable and praise-worthy ministerial carriage which he had among them, for the truth whereof he appealeth also to their own knowledge and conscience; how that as a father (whose office is to instruct his children, being come to age, *Gen. 18, 19.*) he made application of the doctrine delivered by him unto every one of them in particular, by *exhorting* some to duty, duty, to wit, seriously and with much intreaty, (as the word doth signifie) by comforting others under their outward crosses or inward sad exercises, and in order hereto by speaking lovingly and affectionately unto them, (as the word doth signifie) and by *charging* or obtesting others, and that with most severe commination of terrible judgements, as the word doth usually imply. *Doct. 1.* The most exact touchstone whereby to try the real soundness of any mans holiness, is to judge him by what he is in the duties of his particular station; If so he not only discharge the common duties which are incumbent to every Christian of whatsoever calling,

but

but alſo make conſcience of thoſe particular duties unto which he is in a peculiar manner obliged, as a man ſet in ſuch a ſtation, whether as a Magiſtrate, or Miniſter, or Maſter, or ſervant, &c. for, *Paul* doth mention his diligence in the ſeveral duties of his particular calling as a Miniſter, for an evidence that his life was holy, juſt and unblameable, while he ſaith immediately after the former purpoſe, *As you know how we exhorted, &c.* 2. As a Chriſtian, and eſpecially a Miniſter, may ſometimes ſpeak to the commendation of his own carriage, and thereby do God good ſervice, 2 *Cor.* 6. 3, 4, &c. So Chriſtian prudence ſhould teach him to ſingle out thoſe things eſpecially for the matter of his own commendation, for which he knoweth he is already approved and commended unto peoples own conſciences : for, *Paul* doth commend his own Miniſterial carriage from ſuch things moſt, as appeareth by his reiterated appeals to their own conſciences, for bearing witneſs to the truth of what he ſaith, and here he appealeth again : *As you know, ſaith he.* 3. As the chief piece of a Miniſters work is to make pertinent application of general truths unto the particular caſes of the Lords people : So becauſe the caſe of all is not one and the ſame, but diverſe, therefore he muſt, chiefly in the applicatory part of his work, cut and divide the word aright, 2 *Tim.* 2. 15. nor by ſpeaking unto all the ſame things, and alike, but aſſigning unto every man his own convenient portion, by exhorting the more tractable, comforting the afflicted, and by obteſting and charging under all higheſt pain ſuch as are more refractory and obſtinate : for, ſo doth *Paul, As you know,*



know, saith he, how we exhorted, and comforted, and charged. 4. It is not sufficient; exoneration of a Minister that he Preach in publick, and there make as particular application of general truths as in prudence he may; But because there are some things which it is not expedient to mention in publick, *Eph. 5. 12.* and some who cannot be so well gained by taxing their sin in publick, and others who shuffle by themselves the closest application that a Minister in prudence can make in the publick; therefore he is also obliged to make application of and to dispense the word to every one in private, severally, and apart, so far as he may without appearance of evil, *chap. 5. 22.* or wasting the time which should of necessity be spent in fitting him for, and discharging of the publick duties of his Ministry which he oweth unto all; for *Paul exhorted, comforted, and charged every one of them, 5.* The Minister of Christ should so behave himself with meekness and gentleness, as that he do not by an excess of those weaken his Ministerial gravity, authority and respect; A mixture of both is an excellent composition; which if any other doth most beseem a Minister: for, *Paul* having shewn that for gentleness he was a nursing mother, *v. 7. &c.* he declareth here, that for authority and gravity he was as a father: *As a father doth his Children, &c.*

Ver. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God, who hath called you unto his Kingdom and Glory.

Here is, first, what he exhorted them to, even to walk worthy of the Lord, not as if they could have demerited his favour, which is free, *Rom. 11. 6.* but that they might so walk, as to resemble him in what concerned their duty, *1 Pet. 1. 14, 15.* As a child is said to be worthy of such a father, when he imitateth him; and so as their life might be accounted worthy to be taken notice of by him, when they with all their actions should come to stand and be judged in his sight. Next, there is a reason to enforce this walk, in a description of God, from his gracious act of calling them to partake, not only of his Kingdom of grace here, but also of glory hereafter. *Doct. 1.* As Christians are not called to Idleness, or to stand still doing nothing, but to walk and make progress; So the rule by which they ought to walk is not their own corrupt wit, nor yet the approbation or example of men, but that excellent pattern of divine properties and virtues, which Scripture ascribeth to God, and are held forth to be imitated by us, in so far as our duty is expressed by them; for, *Paul* says they were called to walk worthy of the Lord. *2.* Though there is no walk attended with such real profit, credit or comfort, as our walking worthy of the Lord, and labouring to resemble him; yet so backward are we to the way, so apt to be discouraged in it, so resolute are men by nature never to own it, that there must be no small work before we con-

78 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

descend to enter it; yea, the Godly themselves do need a sharp spur to poule them forward, to keep them from fainting in it, or turning away from it: for, *Paul* saw it needful to exhort, comfort and charge even those whom God had already called, that they would walk worthy of God. 3. As none can walk worthy of God but those who are effectually called, all others being dead and destitute of any principle of spiritual life and motion: So then do we improve those excellent priviledges which follow upon effectual calling, aright, when we do not turn grace unto wantonness, but look on all our gracious receipts as so many engagements and incitements unto duty: for, he supposeth they were called, and draweth an argument from their calling, and those gracious priviledges which follow on it, to make them walk worthy of God: *walk worthy of God who hath called you, saith he, to his Kingdom and glory.* 4. As there is an inseparable connexion betwixt a mans being a kindly subject of Gods Kingdom of Grace here, and his partaking of glory hereafter: So there is not any thing of greater force, to make a man walk worthy of God, by leading an holy life, than his well grounded faith and hope of glory to be enjoyed in Heaven: The man who looketh to be in Heaven for ever, cannot choose but have his conversation in Heaven, and imitate himself somewhat to the custome and manners of that Country, where he intends to live eternally: for, *Paul* makes the partaking of Gods glory to follow necessarily upon reception to his Kingdom, and both an argument to make them walk worthy of God: *who hath called you unto his Kingdom and glory.*

Ver.

Ver. 13. *For this cause also thank we God without ceasing, because when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) the word of God, which effectually worketh also in you that believe.*

The Apostle having already set forth his own ministerial carriage, doth now (in further prosecution of his main scope, which is to incite them unto constancy) put them in mind of the success of his Ministry among them, and thereby confirmeth that his entrance unto them was not in vain, as to the third thing which I shewed on v. 1. was pointed at by that expression. And, first, he expresseth his success among them briefly, while he sheweth, that *uncessantly*, or, at all times, when occasion offered and God required, he made conscience of thanksgiving to God for the work of their effectual calling by his Ministry, implied in the expression *for this cause*, which relates to the close of v. 12. even because God had called them to his Kingdom and glory. And next he proves they were effectually called, and thereby doth more fully express the success of his Ministry, by shewing, 1. They had heard the word of God preached by him attentively. 2. They received it being heard, or did take it to their second consideration whether it was the word of God, or not; for so the word, rendered *received* in the former part of the verse, doth imply, even to receive what is spoken in order to the tryal of what truth is in it. 3. After tryal

80 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

they found, and were perswaded that it was no humane invention, but the truth of God : and here *Paul* inserts in a parenthesis, that it is so indeed, and consequently, that they were not mistaken in their perswasion. 4. They did receive and embrace it as such, for the word, rendered *received* in the second place, differs in the original from the former, and signifieth so to receive, as with the heart and by faith to embrace what after tryal hath been found to be truth. 5. The word being thus received did work effectually (in believers among them) a gracious and real change from sin to holiness of life, as the fruit of the word is set forth, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5*. The word in the original signifieth to work with a kind of irresistable efficacy. *Doct. 1.* The Lord doth usually bless with success the pains of those Ministers, whose life and conversation doth prove exemplary for piety unto the flock, and an ornament unto the Gospel which they Preach : for, *Pauls* pains, whose life and conversation was such (as is formerly held forth) were blessed with that measure of success among the *Thessalonians*, as he seeth reason to thank the Lord for it : *for this cause also thank we God.* 2. As a Minister may sometimes reflect with joy upon the fruit of his labours, among the Lords people : So he should beware in so doing to sacrifice unto his own drag and net, *1 Cor. 13. 10.* but ought to ascribe the praise of all his success unto God, who alone doth teach his people to profit, *Isaiah 48. 17.* for, *Paul* reflecteth upon his success with thanksgiving to God : *for this cause also thank we God.* 3. Though it be matter of thanksgiving

giving to God from a Minister, that he himself hath obtained grace to discharge his duty faithfully, whatever be his success among a people, seeing in that case he is alwayes a sweet savour unto God, 2 Cor. 2. 15. yet a tender hearted servant of Christ doth never find his heart so much enlarged in this duty of thanksgiving, and all restraints so fully taken off which might discourage him in it, as when the Lord is pleased to bless his faithful diligence with fruit and success among the people of his charge: for, *Paul* doth then find himself enlarged most to this duty, when his assiduous pains did get an answerable return of fruitfulness: *for this cause also thank we God.* 4. It is a great encouragement, whether for Ministers or private Christians, to bear burthen by prayer and thanksgiving unto God with and for others, of whom it may be in charity presumed that they are dealing earnestly with God for themselves: for, he saith, *we also thank God.* The particle *also*, implyes, they themselves were making Conscience of this duty and therefore he and his associates did discharge it the more heartily. 5. Our hearts should be disposed to, and kept in such a frame for duties of Gods immediate worship, and especially for speaking to God in prayer or praise, that when ever occasion is offered, and the Lord doth call us to it we may be alwayes in a readiness to close with it: for, *Paul* did thank God without ceasing, that is, he was alwayes ready for it, and when occasion offered did go about it. 6. The Scripture in hand doth point at some steps, wherein people must walk, who would have the Gospel blessed with success upon them. As

the word of God, and chiefly the Gospel Preached by sent Ministers, is the ordinary means of converting sinners to God: So they who would be converted by it must lend an attentive ear to hear it, and carefully wait upon such occasions of hearing it as God doth offer: for *Paul* speaking of the means of their conversion and fruitfulness, saith, *The word of God which ye heard of us.* 2. They must seriously ponder and meditate upon the word heard, and especially bring it to the proof, whether it be the word of God or not, otherwise bare hearing cannot profit: for, saith he, *ye received the word which ye heard of us.* See the Exposition. 3. As the word of God delivered by his sent Ministers doth still remain Gods word; speak it who will, *Matth.* 23. 2, 3. or let men think of it what they will, *Ezek.* 2. 4, 5. the nature of the word is nothing altered: So the man who would have the word blessed with success unto him, must labour to settle himself in this perswasion, that the word delivered from Scripture is the word of the eternal God: And, indeed, after an accurate search, it will be found to be so, by the consent of all its parts, though written at divers times and several hands, by the fulfilling of its prophecies, the majesty and simplicity of its stile, the and wonderful efficacy of it in changing mens hearts, the malice of Satan against it in all ages, and yet the Lords wonderful preserving of it, &c. for, *Paul* affirms it to be Gods word, and that they after search had found it to be so: *ye received it not as the word of men, but (as it is in truth) as the word of God.* 4. When a man is thus perswaded, that the word delivered from

from Scripture is no humane invention, but the word of God, he may receive and entertain it as his word, trembling at threatnings, *Isa. 66. 2.* rejoicing at and imbracing promises, *Hab. 11. 13.* yielding obedience to precepts, *Act. 4. 6.* and submitting with patience to sharpest reproofs, *1 Sam. 3. 18.* for that is to receive the word as Gods word, and such a receiving is the ordinary consequent of the forementioned perswasion: for, they being perswaded it was Gods word, did receive and by faith embrace it: *ye received it, saith he, not as the word of man but as the word of God. 5.* When a man hath thus received and imbraced the word, he must labour to prove his so doing, by making it appear that the word hath wrought effectually, and over the belly of all impediments, a mighty and gracious change in him from sin to holiness: and the word, so received by faith, is alwayes attended with such efficacy in those who receive it: It is the power of misbelief in hearers, which maketh so much Preaching to so little purpose: for saith he, *which, to wit, the word so received, effectually worketh also, not in all, but in you that believe.*

Ver. 14. *For ye, brethren, became followers of the Churches of God, which in Judea are in Christ [Jesus: for ye also have suffered like things of your own Countrymen, even as they have of the Jews.]*

He proveth what he spoke of the success of his Ministry, and efficacy of the word among them, from their constancy and patience under sharp sufferings



ferings for truth; which, for their incouragement  
 and comfort, he doth set forth under a comparison of  
 likes or equals, to this sense, that they were follow-  
 ers or made conform to the Christian Churches in  
*Judea*, here called the Churches in *Judea* which are  
 in Christ, who are thereby distinguished from the  
 Jewish Synagogues, who held themselves for  
 Churches of God, but rejected Christ: The ground  
 of which conformity and likeness he sheweth did  
 lye in this, that they, the Christian Church at  
*Thessalonica*, had for the same truth endured and  
 suffered the like evils and hardships, and with the  
 same constancy and courage, from their own Coun-  
 trymen and fellow Citizens, even as the Christian  
 Jews had endured and suffered from the obdured  
 Jews at home in *Judea*, *Heb.* 10. 32, 33, 34.  
*Dock.* 1. So effectual and powerful in working is  
 the word of truth, that it makes the imbracers of  
 it endure the greatest hardships and sharpest suf-  
 ferings for love to it, rather than to deny it a  
 testimony when God calls for it: for, he gives this  
 as an instance of the efficacy of the word, that  
 they became followers of the Churches of God in  
 suffering for truth. 2. There is not a more con-  
 vincing evidence that the word of God is received  
 as it ought, and of its supernatural efficacy in those  
 who do receive it, than that it works a conformity  
 in them with others in that which is good, and  
 especially in bearing afflictions and sufferings for  
 truth with Christian courage and patience as they  
 ought: for, among all others, he pitcheth on this  
 one evidence, that they had received the word  
 aright, and that it had wrought effectually in them,  
 even

even that they became followers of the Churches of God, in their couragious and Christian carriage, under sufferings for truths sake. 3. As every error and imperfection in a Church doth not presently unchurch them, nor provoke the Lord to withdraw his special and powerful influence, which is necessary for actuating the graces of his Spirit in them, and for making them fruitful in good works: So we ought diligently to distinguish the sinful failings and praise-worthy practices, both of persons and Churches, that we neither imitate them in what is evil, nor yet under a pretence of hatred to their evil, neglect to follow and imitate those things in them which are truly good: for, though the Christian Churches in *Judea* were in some things extreemly tenacious of the Ceremonial Law now abolished, *Act. 21.* yet they got the name of true Churches, and were honoured of God to be eminent sufferers for truth, and the Church at *Thessalonica* did imitate them in their Christian suffering, though not in their sinful failings: *ye became followers of the Churches of God in Judea, for ye have suffered like things.* 4. It is no small encouragement and comfort to the Lords people under a suffering lot that nothing doth befall them but what is common to men, yea to the best and choicest of Gods Saints and servants, and that the Lord doth try them with nothing but that wherein some of his eminent worthies have ridden the ford before them: for, *Paul* comforts them under their sufferings from this, that they had the Churches in *Judea* for their precedents, yea and, as it is *v. 15.* Christ himself, his Prophets and Apostles, *ye be-*  
*came*

*came followers of the Churches of God in Judea: for ye have suffered like things.* 5. As it addeth no small weight unto a suffering lot, that those of our nearest relations are most instrumental in it; So such is the fury of a persecuting spirit that when men are judicially given up of God unto it, they break all natural and civil bonds, and prove unnatural Beasts and Tigers towards those of their most near relations, who dare not deny the truth which they do persecute: for, the Churches both in *Judea* and *Thessalonica* were persecuted by their *Countrymen*, which made their sufferings the more weighty: The word signifieth men of one Nation, Tribe, or Company.

*Vcr. 15. Who both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own Prophets, and have persecuted us; and they please not God, and are contrary to all men.*

*16. Forbidding us to speak to the Gentiles, that they might be saved, to fill up their sins alway: for the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*

The Apostle having occasionally mentioned the persecution raised by the Jews, in all places where they had power, against the Gospel, doth see it necessary not only further to comfort those suffering *Thessalonians*, by shewing that Christ and the Prophets had formerly suffered, and they the Apostles did presently suffer no less than they: but also to prevent their stumbling at the Gospel upon this ground, that the Jews who in former times were Gods only people did so much oppose it.

Which

Which he doth, first, by taking off their deceiving vizard, or mask, of being Gods only people, under which they lurked and made themselves terrible to all their opposites, & by making them appear in their own colours, while he reckoneth out seven horrid crimes, whereof the body of that people, made up of Parents and Children in several succeeding generations, were guilty : As 1. they *killed*, with great barbarity and cruelty ( as the word doth signifie ) Jesus Christ, who was the Lord of glory, 1 Cor. 2. 8. and their Lord, to whom they owed subjection and homage. 2. They *killed* with the same barbarity the holy Prophets, called here *their own*, because they were of their own Nation, and sent with a peculiar message to them. 3. They *persecuted*, banished and drave away ( as the word doth signifie ) *Paul* and the rest of the Apostles. 4. They pleased not God, they neither had his favour, nor cared much for it ; Their woful way displeased him exceedingly. 5. They were contrary, and enemies unto all men, to wit, in so far as they hindered the course of the Gospel, by which alone salvation is brought to lost mankind, Tit. 2. 11. This is contained, v. 15. Their sixth crime was their violent hindering ( as the word rendred forbidding doth signifie ) the Apostles to speak, or preach, to wit, the Gospel, unto the Gentiles, and consequently obstructing, so far as in them lay, the salvation almost of all the world. The last crime with which they are charged is, That however they did not intend any such thing, yet by committing those and many other such mischiefs, they did *all wayes*, and without intermission *fill up their sins*,  
that

88 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

that is, carry on their wickedness to such a measure and height, as God had decreed to permit them to come at, without stop or hinderance, before he did inflict deserved judgement. See the like phrase to this sense, *Gen. 15. 6. Matth. 23. 32.* and having thus reckoned out their crimes, he doth further prevent all stumbling at the Gospel, that might arise from their opposition to it, by shewing that as the wrath of God had already begun to seize upon them, by hardning them judicially in sin (for he speaks in the preterit time, to denote that this wrath was already begun :) So it should pursue and surprize them suddenly and unexpectedly, (as the word rendered *come* doth imply,) and that to the uttermost, without all mitigation, or to the end (as the word in the original doth read,) which speaks the continuance of their Judgement, until *Jerusalem*, wherein the great part of the Jews were at that time providentially assembled, was taken, sacked and destroyed by the *Romans*; after which the Jews have hitherto been no more a people, but scattered abroad through the face of the earth. For confirming this sense of the words see *Dan. 9. 26.* with *Matth. 23. 38.*

From *v. 15.* Learn 1. As it doth much imbitter a suffering lot, when those who are Satans instruments in it do go disguised under a mask of piety and zeal for truth : So it is no less comfort and encouragement to Christs suffering servants, when that deceiving mask is taken off their persecutors, and they are made to appear in their blackest colours, and to be what they really are, profane enemies to God, under a pretext of friendship to him :

for,

for, because it was one of the most bitter ingredients in all their sufferings, that they had their rise from the Jews, who were in reputation for Gods only people, therefore doth Paul discover them to be but profane Atheists: *who both killed the Lord Jesus, &c.* 2. It is a choice and excellent cordial to keep a Christian from fainting under his sharpest tryals, to call to mind the sore sufferings of the Lord Christ, who did willingly (*John* 10. 18.) endure much more for us than we can endure for him, *Rom.* 5. 6, 7, 8. and by his sufferings hath not only cast us a Coppy, *1 Per.* 2. 21. but also sanctified ours, and taken the gall and wormwood of deserved wrath out of our cup before we be made to drink it, *Joh.* 16. 33. for, Paul doth put them in mind of Christs sufferings, thereby to hearten those *Thessalonians* under theirs: *who both killed the Lord Jesus.* 3. That the wise and holy Lord hath decreed to permit sin, and that God doth make mans sin turn about to his own glory and his peoples good, doth no wayes excuse the sinner or make him guiltless, and that because he sinneth willingly, and not to fulfil the Lords decree, whereof he is ignorant, *Jer.* 23. 18. or to promote that good intended by God, but to satisfy some one or other of his own sinful lusts, and to vent his spleen and enmity against the Lord, *Isa.* 10. 7, &c. for, though it was determined before by God that Christ should dye, *Act.* 4. 28. and though lost sinners could not otherwise be saved, *Act.* 4. 12. yet the actors and instruments in his death, are here charged as horrid sinners in that act: *who both killed the Lord Jesus.* 4. Accession

to sin by counsel, procurement, or any other way, doth make the person who is so accessory guilty of the sin, as if he were an immediate actor of it: for, though it was the *Romans* who were the immediate actors, both Judge (*Matth. 27. 2, 26.*) and executioners (*Matth. 27. 27.*) in Christs death, and not the Jews, *Iohn 18. 31.* yet because their malicious accusations, *Luk. 23. 10.* and importunate intreaties with *Pilate*, *Luk. 23. 18, 21.* did procure it, Therefore are they here charged as guilty of it: *who hath killed the Lord Jesus.* 5. There is no sin so old, which is not (if not repented of and pardoned, *Isa. 43. 25.*) in recent memory with God: for, the Lord doth here remember that long agoe by-past guiltiness in *killing their own Prophets.* 6. The sins of Parents are imputed to Children, when Children continue to walk in their Fathers steps, and that because they do in that case by their practice approve what their Parents did, and in effect proclaim that if they had lived in the dayes of their Fathers, they would have done the same, *Matth. 23. 29.* for, here, the present generation of the Jews are charged with the sin of their Parents, who killed the Prophets, and that because they walked in their steps, by killing the Lord Jesus and persecuting the Apostles: *who killed ——— their own Prophets.* 7. So ungrate is man, and such an enemy to his own mercies, that being left unto himself he will not fail, nor only to refuse an offer of friendship and peace with God, but also to requite evil for good unto those who labour with them to accept it: And as it hath been the lot of Gods publick Ministers in all ages, to receive

receive such a meeting from those to whom they are sent; So they ought to resolve to meet with such a requital yet: for, though Christ the Lord, the Prophets and Apostles did come to the Jews with that offer, yet they both killed the Lord Jesus, and their own Prophets, and have persecuted us, saith Paul. 8. There are some sins, and especially enmity to God and his work, which often run as it were in a blood from Parent to Child through many generations, the Lord in justice so permitting and ordering, that he may visit the sins of the Fathers upon the Children, *Exod. 20. 5.* and punish Godless Parents in their more Godless posterity, *Psal. 109. 13.* for, this sin became hereditary, and in a kind transient from one generation to another among the Jews. The former generations killed their own Prophets, and the present hath persecuted us, saith Paul. 9. As God is highly displeased with opposers and persecutors of a Godly Ministry: So a persecuting spirit, when men are given up unto it, in progress of time doth waste the Conscience, eat up all tender respect to God and his service, and rendreth men in the end very Atheists: for, this follows upon their persecuting a sent Ministry, *They please not God*, that is, God was not pleased with them, neither did they care to please him. 10. Where the fear of God is not, there cannot be due respect to man, and accordingly as men do loose the reins unto impiety against the Lord, so do they by little and little lose all sense of common humanity, until at last, if the Lord restrain not, they prove wholly barbarous, very *ishmahels*, their hand against every man, and every



mans hand against them : for, upon their not caring to please God, they became *contrary to all men.*

From v. 16. Learn 1. As the Gospel findeth all men in a condition lost by nature, and is the only means appointed of God for bringing lost man unto a state of salvation by Christ, the attaining whereof should be the great end proposed by all who Preach it : So there can be no such evidence of an hostile mind in any against all mankind, as to impede and forcibly forbid the Preaching of this Gospel, and thereby to seek the destruction not only of the body, which other enemies rest satisfied with, but also of the immortal soul : for, he gives this as an evidence of their enmity to all men, they did *forbid us*, saith he, *to speak to the Gentiles*, and shews that the end of the doctrine of the Gospel, and their aim in preaching it, was, *that they might be saved.* 2. When men do wilfully reject the offer of salvation themselves, they do not usually rest until they first envy and at last maliciously oppose the embracing of it by others : If they do not enter themselves, neither will they suffer others : for, the Jews who rejected Christ and the Gospel themselves did forbid the Apostles to speak unto the Gentiles that they might be saved. 3. When men do enter once a course of sin, and advance some steps in it, they cannot well retire, but (except the Lord restrain or work a gracious change) one sin will make way for another, until the enslaved sinner be carried on to the greatest height of sin and wickedness that his utmost power and ability can reach : for, the Jews being once ingaged in a course of persecution

tion were never quiet, but sinned alwayes, that is, made daily progress in wickedness to fill up their sins alway. 4. The providence of God prescribeth bounds, as unto all things, *Eph. 1 — 11.* so unto mens sins, There being a certain measure of sinning condescended upon by God, for Nations, Families or Persons with whom God hath a controversie, beyond which they cannot pass, and to which they shall come, before the Lord take course with them: for, the *filling up of their sins*, here spoken of, is to be understood with respect had to that measure, condescended upon in Gods secret decree and purpose: — *to fill up their sins alway.* 5. That the Lord gives way unto Godless sinners to run on in wickedness without controul or check, doth come from no respect, but hatred to them, The Lord permitting them so to do that their measure of sinning being the sooner filled up, the more unexpected wrath and destruction from the Lord may seise upon them: for, the Apostle shews that Gods intention in giving way to all their former wickedness was to *fill up their sins alway.* 6. When the former sins of a Person, Family or Nation, have justly provoked the Lord in his wrath to harden them, and give them up judicially to satisfie their own hearts Lusts, and to follow, without controule from him, whatever their Godless profane heart shall suggest to them, In such a case, they prove remediless, and cannot choose but add sin to sin, until the Lord one way or other take some course with them: for, so was it with the Jews being given over of God they filled up their *sin alway, untill wrath did come*

*upon them to the uttermost.* 7. The Lord doth keep a kind of proportion betwixt his wrath and the sins of an impenitent people, so that as they go on in sinning and will not be impeded, until they come to that height and measure, further than which they cannot go : So doth the Lord give way to his wrath and makes it pursue them, until it destroy, consume and make a full and final end of them : for, thus was it with the Jews, they filled up their sin alway, and Gods *wrath came upon them to the uttermost, or, to the end.* 8. The more eminent mercies and favours from God a people or person have lived under and enjoyed, the more signal Judgements shall they be surprized with, in case of their continued abuse of, and ingratitude for such excellent receipts : for, the Lord in the point of mercy and favour deals so with the Jews as he did not with any people, *Psal. 147. 19, 20.* and because of their ingratitude they are made examples of Gods wrath and Judgement : ——— *the wrath is come upon them to the uttermost.*

*Ver. 17. But we, brethren, being taken from you for a short time, in presence, not in heart, endeavoured the more abundantly to see your face with great desire.*

In the second part of the Chapter, the Apostle, in further pursuance of his *main scope*, which is to make them cleave unto the doctrine Preached by him, doth relate unto them that solicitous care and most intimate affection, he yet had of them and

to them : and he falleth upon and prosecutes this purpose, in a kind of Apologie for his absence from them, which he excuseth, first, from his earnest desire and purpose he had to see them before now. And 1. he expresseth the cause of his earnest desire, to wit, his sudden removal ; being driven away from them unexpectedly, or in the instant of an hour ( as the words rendred, *for a short time*, do well read, and is most agreeable to the history, *Act. 17. 10.* ) which his suddain removal occasioned him no less grief than that of a tender father, when bereft of his orphan Children ( as the word rendred *taken from you* doth imply ) whence it came to pass that though his bodily presence was by force and violence taken from them, yet he had left his heart and affection with them. Next he expresseth his desire and purpose it self to this sense, that the greater his grief was for his removal from them, his *endeavour* or resolute fervent purpose to see them ( as the word implyeth ) together with his continued and active desire ( as the word rendred *desire* doth signifie ) were so much the more vehement. *Doct. 1.* A tender walker will labour to approve himself ( though chiefly --- *2 Tim. 2. 15.* yet ) not only to God, by making conscience of every duty ; but also to man, so that he cannot willingly lye under the suspicion of a neglected duty, but will labour as he can have access to clear himself of it : for, Paul conceiving they might have suspected he had sinfully neglected his duty in giving them a visit, when he ought and might, he doth here clear himself of that neglect : *for we, brethren, being taken*

96 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*  
*from you, &c.* 2. The society, presence, and mutual  
fellowship of the Lords people among themselves,  
doth prove most sweet and advantageous, and espe-  
cially the presence and fellowship of the flock is  
most acceptable unto a Pastor, whose pains the  
Lord hath blessed among them: for, *Pauls* labours  
were blessed unto the *Thessalonians*, and therefore  
his absence from them was so grievous to him,  
and their presence so much desired by him: *But*  
*we being taken from you, &c.* 3. It is therefore  
no little piece of Satans work and business to mar  
the comfort of any such fellowship, not only by  
working strife, division and prejudice among them  
while they are together, *Act, 15. 39.* but also by  
procuring one way or other, their scattering into  
divers places, so that they cannot enjoy that mu-  
tual fellowship which gladly they would: for,  
saith *Paul*, *we were taken from you for a short*  
*time*; and this by Satans procurement as the fol-  
lowing verse doth shew. 4. So great delight hath  
a Godly Pastor to converse among his flock, that  
even necessitated absence from them, occasioned  
by persecution or other wayes, will be grievous to  
him: So was it with *Paul*, whose necessitated re-  
moval from the *Thessalonians* was no less grievous,  
than a Fathers removal from his destitute Or-  
phans, as the word implyeth, which is rendred *be-*  
*ing taken from you.* 5. It is the duty and wis-  
dom of the Lords people to make good use of the  
company and pains of godly and faithful Ministers,  
seeing unexpectedly, in a moment, and twinkling  
of an eye they may be deprived of them: for,  
*Paul* was taken from them *for a short time*, or  
in

in a short time, the instant of an hour, as the word doth read. 6. It is no small comfort unto the Lords people under their saddest dissipation and scattering, that however they cannot enjoy the bodily presence one of another, yet they may be present one with another in heart and affection, by minding one anothers case, 2 Cor. 7. 3. by being suitably affected with it, Heb. 13. 3. and not only praying to God for, but also by all lawful means procuring the good one of another, Col. 4. 12. for, though Paul was taken from them *in presence*, yet *not in heart*. 7. Where desires after good are fervent, and such as they ought, they will be accompanied with fixed endeavours and purposes to get them accomplished : a desire that comes not up the length of an endeavour and purpose, is not worthy the name of a praise-worthy desire, but of the sluggards raw and coldryf wish, Prov. 21. 25. for, Pauls great desire to see them, had endeavours or fixed purposes joyned with it : *we endeavoured to see your face with great desire*. 8. True grace and gracious affections of love, desire, hope, hatred, &c. the more they are opposed, they grow the more fervent, all contrary opposition being but as Oyle, or a little water cast upon a flame, which maketh it burn the more : for, the more that Paul was stopped from coming to them, he *endeavoured the more abundantly to see their face with great desire*.

Ver. 18. *Wherefore we would have come unto you (even I Paul) once and again, but Satan hindered us.*

He excuseth his absence secondly, and doth further acquaint them with his sollicitous care of them, by shewing, first, that he and his associates, in whose name he doth write all along, but it seems especially he himself not only desir'd and purpos'd to give them a visit, but also did *once and again*, that is, divers times enterprise to fulfil his purpose: (for, the word rendered *we would* must be taken for such an enterprise, and not for a naked desire, seeing he had such a desire always, and not only once and again) and secondly by shewing that Satan had hinder'd him to fulfil his enterprise, either by stirring up some to lay snares for him in the way, as *Act. 23. 12, &c.* or by raising new troubles in other Churches, which required *Pauls* presence. *Doct. 1.* It doth not sufficiently assoile a man of neglect of duty that he hath had some desire after it, and purposes to set about it, except those desires and purposes have been seconded by active and resolute enterprises, to get them fulfilled and performed: for, *Pauls* desires and purposes were followed with such enterprises: wherefore *we would have come unto you.* 2. Neither will it yet assoile him that he hath once set about his duty, and upon the first discovery of an impediment and hinderance presently retired, and cast by all further care of it; But where there is a seryent and honest desire after duty, there should be a renewing of enterprises and endeavours even after many disappointments, until either their desire be fulfilled, or at least it be made to appear that the Lord hath otherwayes determined, *1 Sam. 16. 1.* compared with 4. for, *Paul* thinks

thinks it not sufficient to excuse his not coming, from this only that he had a fervent desire, and accordingly had enterprized once to come, but addeth, *we would have come to you once and again*, that is, often. 3. The Lord, for good and wise reasons, may suffer his people so far to engage in a business, as once and again to enterprize it, having cleared their way for doing so much, and yet having tryed their obedience in that far, afterwards cast in, or suffer to be cast in, some invincible stop or let to mar them from throughing it; In which case he accepts the will for the deed, and a serious enterprize for full performance, 1 King. 8. 18, 19. for, the Lord did clear *Pauls* way to attempt a Voyage to *Thessalonica* often, and yet permitted Satan to lay in a stop: *we would have come once and again, but Satan hindred us.* 4. It is the duty of Saints to surcease from that which otherwayes were a duty, when God doth call them to surcease from it, and consequently for the time doth make it no duty, either by giving them other more necessary work, or by making some inevitable hazard to their own life appear in that work, without any advantage but with much prejudice to Religion and the work of God: for, *Paul* upon Satan his casting in, through Gods permission, some one or both of those impediments, he delayes his Voyage to *Thessalonica*, which otherwayes was a duty: *we would have come once and again, but Satan hindred us.* 5. As the Child of God can no sooner enterprize that which is really good, but usually he doth as soon meet with some impediment; So whoever be the means or instruments  
for



for impeding us in the way of duty, the Devil himself through Gods permission is the prime Author of that woful work, and all others do but fight under his Banner: for, though other means were doubtless necessary to *Pauls* stay, yet *Satan* hindered us, saith he. 6. When once the Godly are by Satans craft or malice disjoyned, or separate, whether in place, affection or judgement, the same Satan doth bend his wit to hinder their re-uniting and meeting together again in one: So great an enemy is he to that rich advantage, which may be attained in and by the Communion of Saints: for, saith *Paul*, we would have come unto you, but *Satan* hindered us.

*Vet. 19. For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming?*

He doth here give a reason of his desire, purpose, and frequently reiterated attempt to come and see them; and thereby doth also shew how highly he esteemed of them, while by proponing a question (to shew how pathetick he was in his affection to them) and by answering it himself, he declareth, 1. They were his hope, Christ is indeed the only ground and foundation of our hope, 1 *Tim.* 1. 1. by whose merit and intercession we expect to obtain the good thing hoped for, *chap. 5. 9, 10.* but they were only a strengthening incouragement to his hope, in so far as their conversion, by his Ministry, was a speaking evidence, among other things, of his right to the promised reward of glory,

ry, *Dan.* 12. 3. And 2. in the same sense he calleth them his joy, because Gods goodness to them, and bestowed on them by the means of his Ministry, did already in part, and was more fully afterwards in Heaven to furnish him with matter of joy in God. And 3. his Crown, or Ornament, and a crown of rejoycing, or of glorious boasting, for which he had matter of glorying in Christ, and eternal rejoycing and glory was to be freely recompensed to him by God : See 2 *Tim.* 4. 8. And therefore in his answer to the question, he sheweth they were to be all those unto him, nor so much in this life, as at Christs second coming in the great day, whose sight and presence then should make the *Thessalonians* to be that to *Paul* which he expected from them. *Doct.* 1. As we ought to speak and think of Heaven and glory, not drily and warshly, but with an open mouth and enlarged heart, thereby to testifie unto our selves or others, that we believe the reality of what Scripture speaketh to that purpose : So the more we think and speak of that subject as we ought, our faith and sense thereof will grow, and rise by degrees unto a greater height : for, *Paul* speaking of that Heavenly glory, speaks affectionately of it, and his speech concerning it doth rise by degrees, while he mentioneth it first under the name of hope, next of joy, thirdly of a crown of rejoycing : For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing ? 2. A faithful Minister doth take an argument for his present or future rejoycing, not so much from the worth or dignity of the office it self, as from the blessing of God upon the faithful  
employing

employing of his talents in that office: for, *Paul* doth promise unto himself matter of joy and rejoycing, not from this that he was an Apostle, or Minister, but that they were gained to God by his Ministry: *for what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoycing? are not even ye?* 3. Though unregenerate men be sometimes made use of by God as Ministers, for converting of sinners, *Mat.* 7. 22. who already have their reward, because they do all they do to be seen of men, *Matth.* 6. 2. yet when a Minister hath first made sure his own right to Heaven through the blood of Christ, he may expect that the more his labours have been blessed of God for converting souls, he shall have the more of joy and glory at Christs second coming: for, *Paul* affirmeth that they, as being converted by his Ministry, should bring some accession to his joy and rejoycing then, while he saith, *are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming?* 4. As a Minister may sometimes lawfully commend the good he seeth in people, so he should beware lest he so commend them as to flatter them, or cry them up as singular and above others, who are equally deserving: for, the Apostle in commending them as those by whom he should have matter of joy, saith, *are not even ye?* the word may read are not *also* ye, to wit, as other Churches, so that he doth not make them singular. 5. It is the presence of Christ, a sight of him, and of interest in him by faith or sense, which maketh the presence of our graces, or of any good done by us, to afford us matter of comfort, joy or boasting, seeing

ing it is he alone in whom the imperfections of our good are covered, 1 Cor. 1. 30. and by whom that wrath and curse, which would have spoiled our mirth eternally, is quite removed, Gal. 6. 13. for, he implyeth it would be Christs presence which should make them his joy and crown, while he saith, *are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his second coming.* 6. Though the Lord Christ doth manifest himself in some measure unto his own, while they are here on earth, Job. 14. 23. yet the full and through discovery of him is reserved until his second coming: we see him now but through a glass, but then face to face, with such a sight as shall make us thoroughly like him, 1 Job. 3. 2. even our vile bodies shall be transformed by him, and made like his own most glorious body, Phil. 3. 21. for, he conjoyneth Christs presence and his second coming, because his presence shall shine most brightly then: *are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his second coming.*

Ver. 20. *For ye are our glory and joy.*

He repeats, with an asseveration, what he presently shewed they would serve for unto him at Christs second coming, and this to declare both the certainty of the thing in it self, and the perswasion which he had of it, while he saith, *for, or truly* (as the word is sometime rendred) *ye are our glory and joy.* Hence, Learn, our faith and hope of interest in glory when it is attained, and especially when it is accompanied with some foretastings of the

the sweetness of it, should be not only once, but frequently reacted and avowed, hereby to assure our hearts the more that our faith is real and no delusion, and consequently to fit us for rejecting all contrary tentations, when we shall be assaulted with them afterwards : for, *Paul* doth again rejoycingly repeat the confidence he had of joy and glory at Christ second coming, while he saith, *Truly ye are our glory and joy.*

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### CHAP. III.



**I**N the first part of this Chapter, he doth further excuse his long absence, from that signal evidence of his affection, *v. 1.* in sending *Timotheus* to confirm and comfort them, *v. 2.* and having taken occasion hence to speak somewhat for their establishment against fainting under affliction, because affliction is the common lot of the Godly, *v. 3.* and he had forewarned them of all, which had yet come, *v. 4.* he repeaterh what he spoke of his sending *Timotheus* to prevent their defection, *v. 5.*

In the second part of the Chapter he doth further convince them of his ardent affection towards them, by shewing what good tydings *Timotheus* had returned from them, *v. 6.* and what effects they had produced in him, as comfort, *v. 7.* 8. great joy, *v. 9.* with assiduous and earnest prayer to God on their behalf, *v. 10.*

In the third part of the Chapter he breaks forth  
in

in a fervent prayer to God for them, seeking, 1. A successful journey toward them, *v.* 11. 2. Growth and increase in the grace of love, *v.* 12. 3. Establishment in holiness, with the pacifying of their hearts and consciences, *v.* 13.

Ver. 1. **W** Herefore when we could no longer forbear, we thought it good to be left at Athens alone.

The Apostle, being yet further to excuse his long absence from them, and joyntly therewith to expresse that solicitous care which he had of them, by his sending *Timotheus* unto them, he doth first in this verse expresse the cause inwardly moving him to send him, to wit, his fervent affection towards them, which was such that *when he could not longer forbear*, or (as the word signifieth) endure and suffer, to wit, the heavy weight of his earnest desire to see them, and of his perplexing fear concerning them, *he thought good*, or (as the word doth signifie) had an unexpressible affection rather to be left alone in the midst of all his tribulations at Athens, (whither he was driven out of Berea by the fury of the Jews, *Act.* 17. 15.) than that they should be longer destitute of one to supply his absence among them in their great need and hazard: whereby he did prefer their good in a manner to his own. *Doct.* 1. Though the hypocritical desires of wicked men after good are easily quenched, at the first appearance of real or apprehended difficulties, *Prov.* 26. 13. yet the sincere desires of the Godly are not so; but the more they are

are opposed they are the more inflamed, and prove the more vehement: for, *Pauls* sincere desire to see the *Thessalonians* grew so vehement, that he could not longer bear or endure the weight of it, and that because it was opposed *chap. 2. v. 18.* as it appears by the illative particle *wherefore: wherefore when we could not longer forbear.* 2. There can be no more pressing weight upon an holy heart, than strong convictions of a duty necessary to be gone about by him for the Churches good, and the Lords seeming to stand in his way and to keep him up from the performance of it. This is such a weight that though the tender Christian may stand under it for a time, yet what through fear of some controversie which the Lord by crossing him may be pursuing against him, *Numb. 20. 12.* with *Deut. 3. 25, 26.* and what through grief for Gods dishonour and the Churches hurt, by reason that the duty lyeth undone, *1 Cor. 4. 18, 19.* it proveth almost insupportable at length: And where it is thus, it argueth a tender frame of heart: for, *Paul* being convinced it was his duty to visit this Church, and being long impeded from it, doth look upon his disappointment as an unsupportable weight: *when we could not longer forbear, or endure and bear this weight.* 3. Holy submission and patience under crosse dispensations, by which the Child of God is retarded in the way of duty, do no way abolish, but are well consistent with a fervent desire and earnest endeavour, by all lawful means to prosecute that duty wherein he is crossed: Submission indeed removeth fretting impatience, *Act. 21. 14.* but it quickneth holy desires and diligence:

ligence: for, *Paul*, who as he revered God in all cross dispensations, *Phil. 4. 11.* and so doubtless also in this, doth yet use his utmost diligence to compass the duty wherein he was crossed, and for that end he *thought good to be left at Athens alone*, by sending *Timotheus* to supply his absence.

4. Where there is love unfeigned, and a sincere desire after the Churches good, it will make the man indued with it postpone his own good and comfort unto theirs, to wit, his own temporal good to their spiritual, *1 Cor. 8. 18.* yea his own conveniency to their necessity, both in things temporal and spiritual, as here *Pauls* sincere and ardent affection to their good, made him spoile himself of all good company, and willing *to be left at Athens alone.* 5. As in all duties, so especially in duties of kindness to Christs afflicted members, it is not so much to be attended what we do, as from what inward principle we are acted: And particularly, the more of cheerfulness and hearty affection goeth along with our duty, it is the more praise-worthy and accepted both by God and man: and where there is sincere love, what will it make a man not do, endure or cheerfully suffer for the good of the party loved? for, *Pauls* love to them made him cheerfully and willingly deprive himself of all good company for their sake, and the worth and acceptableness of what he did for them lyeth in this, that he did it willingly: *we thought good* saith he, or had an eager affection and good will *to be left at Athens alone.*



Ver. 2. *And sent Timotheus our brother and minister of God, and our fellow labourer in the Gospel of Christ, to establish you, and to comfort you concerning your faith.*

He doth next shew what his fervent affection had moved him to do for them, and for what end he did it. He had sent *Timotheus* unto them; and that he might shew his respect to them in the worth of him whom he had sent, he doth commend *Timotheus* from three Epithetes, as being, first, *a brother*, the usual epithete of Christians, *Act. 11. 29.* because they are born of God, *John 13.* their one Father in Christ, *Eph. 4. 6.* 2. *A minister of God*, because of his office to Preach the Gospel, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* 3. *Pauls fellow-labourer*, because he was his joynt-colleague in the Gospel, that is, in Preaching the Gospel. And the end why he did then send him, was first, to confirm or underprop them, (as the word signifieth) to wit, lest they had been either drawn from the truth by deceitful reasonings, *Col. 2. 8.* or driven from it by force of persecution, *Matth. 10. 22.* Secondly to *comfort them*, the word signifieth both to exhort and comfort, and he was sent for both, not only to comfort them under their sad sufferings, but also to exhort them unto constancy notwithstanding of them. Now the thing which he was mainly to confirm them in, and by exhortation to press upon them, is their *faith*, that is, their firm assent and adhering to the truths of the Gospel.

*Doct.*

*Doct.* 1. Holy desire and fervent love to duty is most ingenious and witty to find out wayes for discharging the duty, even when all ordinary access to it doth seem to be obstructed: for, love and desire in *Paul* to confirm and comfort these *Thessalonians* in their need, makes him find out a way to do that by another, which he could no wayes do himself: *And sent Timotheus — to establish you.*

2. Church-guides, or judicatories, who are charged with the oversight of several Congregations, where they cannot in person officiate themselves are not exonerated by sending forth unto the Lords Vineyard any who may be had, except they employ the fittest, and such of whom there are grounds of hope, that, through the Lords help he may carry on the work for which he is sent: for, *Paul* not being able to go himself, sends not every one, but a man every way fitted for the work, even *Timotheus* a brother, &c. 3. As Ministers, especially they who are of elder standing, and best known in the Church, are bound to give their deserved testimony unto others of the Lords servants, for gaining them respect and credit among the people of their charge: So then is a Minister sufficiently qualified and worthy to be commended as a compleat Minister, when first he is a man in all appearance truly pious, for, *Paul* commendeth *Timotheus* from this, he was a brother. 2. When he is painful and laborious about his masters work: *Timotheus* was a laborer. 3. When he is a lover of unity, and entertaineth peace with others of his masters servants, striving to work with them,

*Phil. 1. 27.* and not against them, in a way of his own separate from them : *Timotheus was a fellow-labourer.* And 4. When he is a lover of truth, as well as of peace, and studyeth unity but in so far, as it thwareth not with vertue : for, he is commended as *a fellow-labourer in the Gospel of Christ.* *Doct. 4.* The office of an Evangelist, among other things, ( see upon *Eph. 4. 11.* ) was to confirm and establish in the faith those Churches which the Apostles had already planted : for, *Timotheus* an Evangelist ( *2 Tim. 4. 5.* ) was sent by *Paul* to confirm and establish this Church in the faith.

5. Such is Satans enmity against the grace of faith, and so many are his onsets, what by one means, what by another to brangle it, *Luk. 22. 31, 32.* as knowing therein the believers great strength doth lye, *1 Joh. 5. 4.* that even the strongest faith hath need of confirmation and establishment : And it is the Godly mans wisdom and duty, in trying times, to have a special care to guard his faith, as that grace which not only Satan striveth to shake most, but also upon the stability whereof the safety, strength and vigour of his other graces depend much : for, though *Paul* had praised their faith much, *chap. 1. 8.* yet he sends here to confirm it, and it especially more than any other of their graces : *to establish you concerning your faith,* saith he. 6. A singular means for strengthening faith under sad afflictions and tryals is for Ministers to hold out, and people to embrace those excellent comforts, which the word of truth holds forth to the Lords people in suffering times : Our standing at a distance from,

from, and questioning our interest in those, do breed discouragement and terrour, and thereby make way for shameful fainting in duty, and soul defection from truth, *Heb. 12. 13.* for, *Timotheus* was sent both to establish and comfort them concerning their faith.

*Ver. 3. That no man should be moved by these afflictions: for your selves know that we are appointed thereunto.*

He doth here shew, 1. The necessity at that time of his sending *Timotheus* to establish them, to wit, the prevention of an apparent hazard, lest any of them, because of *Pauls* or their own afflictions, should have been drawn away by flattery, or shaken and moved from truth, like the taile of a dog following upon his master (as the word signifieth.) 2. And because the same hazard did yet remain in part, he useth two arguments for their present establishment against fainting, either under his or their affliction. The first in this verse to this purpose, They themselves knew, or were sufficiently instructed from the doctrine of the Gospel, that all Christs followers, *Mark 8. 34.* and chiefly the Apostles, *1 Cor. 4. 9.* were appointed, or (as the word is rendred, *Luk. 2. 34.*) set as a mark, at which the arrows of affliction and persecution are shot. Now they are thus appointed and set as a mark for trouble by God, both in his eternal counsel, *Rom. 8. 29.* and in his actual separating them from the world by converting grace, *1 Pet.*

2. 21. *Doct. 1.* A Ministers care should be extended towards all and every one of his charge, not only the great, the rich, the strong in grace, and eminent, but even to the poor, the outwardly base, contemptible, and to such as are but weak, even babes in Christ, *Heb. 5. 12, 13.* and this, as at all times, so especially when they are exercised with sharp tryals and sore afflictions: for, *Pauls* care was thus extended towards all at such a time, as is implied, while he saith, *That no man should be moved.* 2. The Lords faithful servants may be so much supported by grace under their saddest sufferings, as that their fear and care will be more exercised towards others of the Lords people, and about the possible sinful consequences of their trouble upon others, than any thing that doth concern themselves: for, supposing the afflictions here spoken of to be *Pauls* own, as certainly his own are not excluded, we find him more afraid of their stumbling, than careful of himself: *That no man,* saith he, *should be moved at these afflictions.* 3. As Christians under afflictions for truth are in hazard to be shaken, brangled and tossed to and fro with the wind of strong tentations, which take their rise from thence: So the ordinary tentations wherewith the Tempter doth assault afflicted Christians have much of insinuating flattery in them, while he seemeth to commiserate their present case, and promiseth much contentment and ease if they step but a little aside from the way of duty for attaining to an outgate: for, the word rendred to  
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be moved significantly to be shaken as a dogs taile, and drawn away by flattery : That no man should be moved by these afflictions. 4. So much ought we to adore and reverence the Lords suprem dominion and absolute providence, as presently without debate to stoop and imbrace whatsoever lot is measured out unto us by it : for, he perswades them to endure affliction without fainting, from this, that they and others were appointed thereunto by Gods. 5. The faith of this, that the Lord hath firmly decreed to bring his followers by the way of the cross to their crown, and to make them first to suffer with Christ, before they reign with him, is an excellent remedy to stay and settle the believer against fainting and wavering under the sorest trouble : for, this is the remedy prescribed here by Paul : for we are appointed thereunto, saith he. 6. Scripture comforts under afflictions cannot support a man except he know them, and be acquainted with them ; and ignorance is often the cause of our great impatience : for, he makes their knowledge of Gods appointment necessary in order to their drawing comfort from it : for, saith he, your selves know that we are appointed thereunto.

*Ver. 4. For verily when we were with you, we told you before, that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass, and ye know.*

He confirmeth here what he said, of their knowing that Christians are appointed and called to undergo a suffering lot, (as appeareth by the casual particle *for*) and withal doth add a second argument to preserve them from fainting, to this purpose, They themselves *knew*, and could bear him witness, that when he was among them at *Thessalonica*, *Act. 17. 1*, &c. he had foretold them that both he and they were to meet with much tribulation from their oppressing persecutors: which prediction was now made out and verified by the event, and therefore there was no occasion from them to faint because of affliction, seeing they were so timously fore-warned of it.

*Doct. 1.* It is the duty of Christs Ministers to give timous warning unto the Lords people of tryals and hardships, which they cannot choose but encounter in their Christian course, lest otherwise when they are surprized with unexpected trouble, they repent their undertaking and succumb, *Mark 14. 17.* for, *Paul* did timously, and when he was with them foretel that they should suffer tribulation.

*2.* When the Lords servants have an open door to Preach the Gospel unto a people, they ought to stir their time, and instruct their hearers in all necessary truths, as not knowing how soon the door may be shut, and the present opportunity of doing good removed, *Prov.*

27. 4. *for, so did Paul, when he was with them, he told them of all necessary truths, and of this in particular, that we should suffer tribulation, saith he.* 3. That the Lords people have had timous warning from the word of truth of their troubles which will attend them in their Christian course, it ought in reason to keep them from fainting and stumbling at a cross, when they meet with one : for, this is the Apostles scope in this verse, to reason them up to a courageous frame of spirit under tribulation, because he had told them before of it. 4. As Ministers ought to be circumspect in their predictions, foretelling nothing for certain but what the word of truth giveth ground to believe that it shall undoubtedly come to pass ; lest otherwise, when the event doth not answer the prediction, their Ministry be brought unto contempt : So the fulfilling of such predictions doth strongly confirm the truth of the word, and underprop the believer in the faith of it, notwithstanding of any sad affliction or hardship he may be under for adhering to it : for, *Paul* foretold nothing but what the event did verifie, and from this that the event did answer his prediction, he doth perswade them not to faint, but to adhere to truth, although they were under present trouble for it : *We told you before, that we should suffer tribulation, even as it came to pass.*



*Ver. 5. For this cause when I could no longer forbear, I sent to know your faith, lest by some means the tempter have tempted you, and our labour be in vain.*

The Apostle repeareth what he spoke, *v. 1.* and *2.* of his sending *Timotheus*, and expresseth a third end why he had sent him (for other two were mentioned, *v. 2.*) and it was, that he might know *their faith*, or their constancy in the faith: and he closeth the verse by giving a reason why he desired so much to know their faith, to wit, a twofold fear, *1.* Lest Satan, who is here called *the tempter*, (as being that eminent tempter) had taken occasion from their present affliction for truth, to tempt them one way or other to make defection from it, and *2.* Lest they had yielded to the tempter, which is not expressed, but implied in that, which would have followed upon their defection, to wit, the loss of *Paul's* labour in Preaching the Gospel among them, which in that case would have been *in vain* and useless as to them, though not to himself, *2 Cor. 2. 15, 16.* *Doct. 1.* The care of an honest Minister towards the people of his charge doth extend it self not only to their first conversion, and the drawing them out of nature to a state of grace; but also to their perseverance in that state: for, *Paul* after he had been instrumental in converting the *Thessalonians*, doth yet remain solicitous about their perseverance: And therefore *I sent*, saith he, *to know your faith.* *2.* A faithful Minister doth not think himself exonerated when

when he hath discharged his duty before the people, but will remain in a Christian manner solicitous of the success of his pains among the flock, when an hireling and time-server doth not much trouble himself about any such thing, *Job. 10. 12.* for, *Paul* from this solicitous care doth send to know their faith, and the fruit of his labours among them. 3. There is an holy jealousy in Christian love, whereby though it believe the best, *1 Cor. 13. 7.* yet it feareth the worst, that all lawful means may be made use of to prevent it: for *Paul* from love doth fear, *lest the tempter had tempted them, and his labour be in vain.* 4. As it is Satans trade to tempt, and to tempt all men, good and bad, *Luk. 22. 31. Eph. 2 — 2.* by all means, *2 Cor. 11. 3.* at all times, *1 Pet. 5. 8.* and to all evil, *2 Thes. 2. 10.* So he omitteth no occasion of exercising this his woful trade with advantage, *2 Cor. 2. 11.* and more particularly he takes advantage of those crosse dispensations, by which the Lord doth exercise his people, to make them cast at truth and piety: for, *Paul's* fear lest Satan had taken occasion from their trouble to tempt them, implyeth, his usual way is to tempt on such an occasion: *Lest by some means the tempter have tempted you.* 5. So much do the best of Saints lye open to Satans temptations, and so ready are they, if left to themselves, to yield when tempted, that a faithful Minister will have reason to fear, to watch, to take heed to himself and the flock, so long as there is a tempter to tempt: for, *Paul* doth fear lest the best among them had been tempted and succumbed: *lest by some means the tempter*

118 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

*tempter have tempted you.* 6. Though the pains and labour of a faithful Minister cannot be in vain as to God, who doth alwayes gain his intent, *Isa.* 55. 10, 11. nor yet as to the Minister himself, whose reward is with the Lord, *Isa.* 49. 4. yet as to the people who make not use of his pains, or make apostasie from that seeming good which once they attained by them, they are alwayes in vain and to no good purpose, yea a snare, *Isa.* 28. 13. and shall be for a testimony against them, *Mark* 6. 11. for, *Paul* implyeth so much as that if they had yielded to the tempter and made apostasie from the faith, *his labour would have been in vain among them.*

Ver. 6. *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us, and brought us good tydings of your faith and charity, and that ye have good remembrance of us alwayes, desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you.*

In the second part of the Chapter, the Apostle being, in order to their further establishment in the truth, to expresse yet more of his fervent affection towards them, which was drawn out by *Timotheus* his return from them, he doth, first, in this verse shew what *Timotheus* did report of them, when he had returned to *Paul* being now at *Corinth*, as it appears from *Act.* 18. 1. with 5. (though he was at *Athens* when he sent him, v. 1.) and the summ of this report in general is called *good tydings, he brought us good tydings*, It is the same word in the original which signifieth to Preach the Gospel, because the thing reported

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ed was the fruit and effect of the Gospel Preached among them, the hearing whereof was as the Preaching of it over again unto Paul. 2. Those good tydings in particular were the report he made, 1. Of their faith, or, of their stedfastness in the faith, 2. Of their love, or sanctified practice according to both tables of the law flowing from faith, for love is the fulfilling of the Law, Gal. 6. 2. 3. Of their special love and respect to Paul, made evident, 1. By their good remembrance of him; or that respective mention which they made of his labour, diligence and his whole Ministerial carriage among them, and that *alwayes* when they had occasion to speak of him. 2. By their earnest desire to see him, The word in the Original signifieth such a desire as is, in a kind, impatient of delays. And lest he had seemed hereby to have reflected upon himself, who had so long delayed to satisfie their longing desire, he adds in the close, that his desire was no less ardent to see them, though he was hindred without any default of his, chap. 2. 18. *Dott. 1.* An Evangelist, one of the extraordinary officers in the new Testament, did herein among other things differ from an ordinary Minister, he was not ryed unto any charge, but being sent out by the Apostles to water such Churches as they had planted, (see v. 2. ) he did there remain, not constantly, but for a certain time, until the Apostles should have further work for him elsewhere: for, *Timotheus* being sent to *Thessalonica* by Paul did not reside there, but returned within a little to be disposed of by Paul as he thought good: *But now when Timotheus came from you unto us.* 2. The Lord doth powerfully

powerfully overrule and turn about the deepest designs of Satan against his work to the furtherance of it, as if they had been purposely contrived for that end : for, Satan by hindering *Paul* to go to *Thessalonica*, chap. 2. 18. got no advantage but detriment, in so far as when *Paul* was converting souls to God, first at *Athens*, next at *Corinth*, *Timothew* was confirming the Church at *Thessalonica* : when *Timothew* came from you unto us, which supponeth he had been with them, and Satan could not hinder that. 3. That the work of Gods grace doth thrive among a people is good tydings from them, and such good tydings may be had even from persecuted Christians : for, those were the tydings which *Timothew* did report from this persecuted Church, and they are called good tydings : *he brought us good tydings of your faith*, &c. 4. The Lords way with his work and people doth often soare so high above all probable means, that it disappoints and abundantly refutes our anxious, and sometimes misbelieving fears : So was it here v. 5. he feared they had yielded to the tempter in his absence from them at a time of so great need, but now he finds it was otherwise, the Lord having supplied the want of *Paul* by some other way : *He brought us good tydings of your faith and charity*. 5. The best tydings which can be reported of any, is that he is a believer in Jesus Christ, a maintainer of charity and good works in his own practice, and one that accounteth highly of the faithful servants of Jesus Christ : And as all those three are alwayes conjoynd, so nothing almost worth the hearing can be reported of any, in whom all or any of those  
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are wanting: for, the good tydings which he reported were, *of your faith and charity and that ye have good remembrance of us*, saith Paul. 6. Though none who are truly Godly ought to be excluded from our special love, yet some may justly challenge a choice room in our affections above others, according to our special interest in them, and stricter tye unto them by nature, 1 Tim. 5. 4. by cohabitation, 1 Tim. 5. 8. by favours received from them, 1 Sam. 18. 1. by their greater usefulness in the work of God, 2 Sam. 18. 3. and because of a greater measure of Gods grace shining in them: for, they made evident their special love unto Paul beyond others, by their *good remembrance of him, and desire to see him*. 7. Among all those who may justly claim, and do most easily obtain a choise room in the child of God his affections above others, a gracious Minister whom the Lord hath made instrumental for his conversion is with the first: for, Paul had been an instrument of their conversion; and therefore he shareth most deeply in their love: *and that ye have good remembrance of us*, saith he. 8. As Christian love doth vent it self in speaking the best of the party loved; so it differeth much as to this effect, from popular applause, Christian love is a constant friend, but popular applause is most uncertain, Matth. 21. 9. with 27. 22, 23. for, herein did they evidence their Christian affection to Paul *that they had good remembrance of him always*. 9. Christian love, and especially that which is betwixt a faithful Pastor and a gracious people of his charge, doth earnestly long to evidence it self in Christian fellowship

fellowship for the mutual comfort and spiritual advantage of both the parties, *Rom. 1. 11, 12;* for, so did their love to *Paul*, and his to them: *desiring greatly to see us, as we also to see you,* saith he.

*Ver. 7. Therefore, brethren, we are comforted over you in all our affliction and distress, by your faith.*

The Apostle, in prosecution of the former scope, doth next shew what effects these good tidings had wrought in him, they are in number four, The first whereof is comfort; expressed here to this purpose, That whereas his mind was otherwise oppressed and perplexed with fear, *v. 5.* he was now *comforted*, or recreated over them, or by what he heard of them, and especially by their faith, or by the testimony which he heard of it. Which effect of comfort is heightened from this, that hereby the bitterness of all the *affliction* and *distress* of any sort (for therefore is it expressed in two words) whether by-past or present, which he had endured either with them, or after his removal from them, was wonderfully sweetened. *Doct. 1.* Christian love doth make it self evident in a fellow feeling sympathie with the case of those to whom it is extended, and the more there is of love, there will be the more Christian sympathie: for, to evidence his ardent affection towards them he sheweth how he sympathized with them; their affliction and apparent hazard of defection did perplex him, *v. 5.* and good tidings from them did comfort him:

*Therefore,*

*Therefore, brethren, we were comforted,* saith he. 2. The Lord doth usually reward a tender frame of spirit in bearing burthen with the Church and people of God in their hazard and afflicted case, by giving the person so disposed the more of comfort and soul-ravishing joy arising from the Churches better case; Those only who mourn with *Zion* are priviledged to rejoyce with her, *Isa.* 66. 10. for; *Paul* was much afflicted with their hazard, *v.* 5. and now he is much comforted, having heard of Gods goodness to them under it: *we were comforted,* and *v.* 8. *now we live.* 3. The Lord doth usually exercise his dearest children with vicissitude of contrary affections, such as sorrow and joy, fear and freedom of mind; weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning, *Psal.* 30. 6. and this because, so impotent are we, that we cannot well carry a full measure of any one of those, for any length of time, without miscarrying one way or other, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. for, *Paul* was exercised; before he was perplexed, *v.* 5. but now he was comforted; before he was as dead, but now, we live, saith he, *v.* 8. *Doct.* 4. The believers joy and comfort do not depend upon his freedom and actual deliverance from outward or inward trouble, but upon the Lords comforting presence, who often takes occasion from his kind dealing with others to pour in upon the believers spirit so full a measure of spiritual joy and comfort, that in a manner the bitterness of all his own trouble is forgot and swallowed up in the sweetness of it: for, thus was it with *Paul*: *We were comforted over you in all your affliction*



and distress. 5. From this, that he expresseth only their faith as the rise of his comfort, though *Timothy* had reported of their other graces, see upon v. 2. doct. 5. by your faith, saith he.

Ver. 8. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord.

He doth here illustrate and confirm what he spake of his comfort, as appeareth by the causal particle *for*, and withall express the second effect of those glad tydings to this purpose, That if, or seeing (as the word may read) they stood fast, or were courageously constant (as the word implyeth) in the faith, whereby they were united to the Lord Christ, he was thereby made to live, that is, of a cheerful spirit, all things went with him according to his wish, for men are said in a sense to live when their concernsments succeed according to their mind, and somewhat beyond their expectation, to the disappointment of their fear, *Gen.* 45. 27. Doct. 1. To rob a man of his comfort, and thereby to dead his spirits, and make his life bitter, is a kind of murder in Gods esteem, for it takes away that which here the Apostle doth call life, to wit, the cheerfulness of his spirit, through the want whereof he did formerly look upon himself as dead; as is implied, while he saith, *for now we live.* 2. As the good of an honest Minister his pains amongst the Lords people redounds to himself in some respect, and is not wholly reserved for him until afterwards, but is in part bestowed upon him even in this life, in so far, as not only his inward, but also his outward man is thereby bettered, his very natural spirits are thereby

by cheer; and consequently his strength preserved, and in an ordinary way his life prolonged: So his want of success, and growth of wickedness among the people of his charge, in despite of all his endeavours to the contrary, is sufficient to dead his spirits, to eat up his cheerfulness, and consequently cut his dayes: for, the one of those doth follow upon the other, and the former is evidently implied, while Paul affirms that his life, or a cheerful frame of spirit did flow from their constancy in the faith: *now we live if ye stand fast in the Lord.*

Ver. 9. *For what thanks can we render to God again for you, for all the joy wherewith we joy for your sakes before our God.*

He doth confirm and illustrate what he spoke, of his cheerful frame of spirit, and withall expresseth the third effect of those good tydings, to this purpose: he did *for their sake*, or by their means, reap so much spiritual and sincere joy (called here, *joy before God*) as he could never in way of thankfulness to God express to the full, and as the cause required, his present sense of Gods love, which had bestowed upon him so rich a mercy: for such questions as this, *what thanks can we render*, &c. do usually imply somewhat above expression, and cannot well be answered, *Psal. 84. 1. and 119. 97--- Dost. 1.* Gods ordinary way of dealing with exercised Christians is, The lower they are brought under sad and weighty exercise, to make their comfort and joy, accompanying their outgate, so

much the more to abound : See *2 Cor. 1. 5.* for, *Paul* who was pressed down, and brought so low with a twofold weight of desire and fear, that he could not longer forbear, *v. 5.* is now as much exalted, that he cannot find words sufficient to express the sweetness of his case : he was comforted, *v. 7.* he did live, *v. 8.* and here, he had joy, and all joy : for *all the joy, wherewith we joy*, saith he. 2. As the Lord doth sometimes furnish his people with more than ordinary matter of joy, and such as they cannot contain, but must express their sense thereof with cheerfulness and good will : So they ought, and in some measure will have a watchful eye, that in all such expressions of joy, they vent nothing that is carnal, sinful or unseemly, but what becometh such as are alwayes in Gods sight, and are especially then most narrowly marked, and taken notice of by his all-seeing eye : for, *Paul* having such matter of joy, while he is about to express it, doth set himself in Gods sight & for *all the joy*, saith he, *wherewith we joy before our God.* 3. Whatever matter of joy a man may have, he cannot improve it, nor attain to the actual exercise of solid and spiritual joy, except his interest in God be in some measure cleared, whose reconciled face doth put such a ravishing lustre upon all our other mercies, as they draw out the heart actually to rejoyce in them, or rather in God for them : See *Psal. 4. 6.* for, though *Paul* had matter of joy from the former good tydings, yet he doth not actually rejoyce, until he close with God as his through Christ, as is implied, while he saith, *for all the joy, wherewith we joy before our God.*

4. Christian love, to those who are Gods, doth give the person who loveth, an interest in all the good things bestowed by God upon those whom he loveth, and a large share of all the joy and comfort, which are occasioned by them : for, *Paul* to make evident his ardent affection to these *Thessalonians*, doth show, that their merciful receipts did give him matter of all joy : for all the joy, saith he, *wherewith we joyed for your sakes*, that is, for Gods mercies towards them, mentioned, *v. 6.* *Doct. 5.* Whoever are, or may be, the occasion of joy, by furnishing matter for it, yet a Godly heart will not rest upon them, but look to the Lord above all, ascribing praise and thanksgiving to him, who not only giveth the cause and occasion of joy, by making instruments to be that which they are, matter of joy and not of grief, *Psal. 20. 9.* but also doth give us to improve that matter of joy unto actual rejoycing, which otherwise we could not, *Eccles. 2. 24.* for *Paul*, though he had the matter of his joy furnished from the *Thessalonians*, yet he looks over them to God, and returns him thanksgiving for it : *what thanks can we render unto God, for all our joy*, saith he. 6. As giving of thanks is all the rent, which either the Lord doth crave, or we can return unto him, for favours received : So no thanksgiving of ours can be lookt upon as an answerable return to the meanest of mercies ; and especially a Godly heart can never satisfie himself in the matter of his thankfulness to the Lord, he prizeth the mercy received so high, and seeth his thanks to be so feckless, that he judgeth all he can do of no value,

and no wayes answerable to what so rich mercy in  
 God doth call for; for, *Paul* feels that thanksgiv-  
 ing was his due; but cannot satisfie himselfe in  
 any thing he could do of that kind, as is implied,  
 while he saith, *what thanks can we render to God*  
*for all the joy, &c.*

Ver. 10. *Night and day praying exceedingly,*  
*that we might see your face, and might perfect*  
*that which is lacking in your faith.*

Here is the fourth effect, of those glad tidings  
 upon *Paul*, he was thereby put to his prayers,  
 which were, 1. Assiduous, the phrase *night and*  
*day* implyeth such an assiduity, as admits of no  
 other, but necessary intermissions, *Luke 2. 37.* next,  
 it was fervent and serious, so much is implied in  
 his praying *exceedingly*, or as it is in the original,  
 excessively, intimating fervency of affection.  
 3. The thing prayed for, was 1. To see them, or  
 to be present with them. 2. That being with  
 them, he might have occasion by his Preaching to  
 them, and conversing with them, to perfect, supply  
 and make up (as an instrument under God, *1 Cor.*  
*3. 5.*) what was lacking and wanting in their  
 faith, whether in their understanding, as to their  
 knowledge of, or assent unto truths revealed; or  
 in their will and affections, as to their imbracing  
 of, and adherence unto that good thing, held forth  
 by those truths. *Doct. 1.* There can be no such  
 cause of thanksgiving in this life, but there will be  
 also matter for prayer, and an incumbent necessity  
 to go about that duty, there being always somewhat  
 wanting

wanting to the best, and necessary to be had, *Rom. 3. 12.* And prayer being a prime mean appointed of God for obtaining of what we want, *Ezek. 36. 37.* for, though Paul had at this time such matter of thanksgiving, that he could not well express it, *vs. 9.* yet he is assiduous in prayer: *night and day praying exceedingly.* 2. Our prayers to God should be both assiduous and serious, the former without the latter being but vain babbling, condemned *Math. 6. 7.* and the latter without the former but a violent, evanishing flash, to no purpose, condemned *Isa. 26. 16.* for, his prayers had those two properties: *night and day praying exceedingly,* faith the. 3. There is a singular efficacy and aptness in Ministers presence and preaching, through the Lords blessing, to beget, confirm, or carry on the work of grace in hearers, beyond what there is in his writings, while he is absent: There is not only a more expresse promise of a blessing unto Preaching, *Rom. 10. 17.* but also there is nothing almost in a man, whom God hath sent to gain souls, whether carriage, gesture, or countenance, which the Lord doth not make subservient unto edification one way or other, *1 Cor. 9. 22.* for, therefore is it that Paul, not content with writing to them, doth so much desire to see their faces, that he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith. 4. As the faith of the best hath its own inlaicks, and most eminent believers have need to pray, *Lord increase our faith,* *Luke 17. 5.* so faith is preserved and increased in the use of those means, by which it was begotten at first: It is begotten by ordinances, and especially by the word

280 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*  
Preached, and it is preserved and receiveth increase by ordinances and the publick Preaching of the word: for, though *Paul* did highly commend their faith, *chap. 1. 3.* yet somewhat was lacking to it, and he prayeth he may see them, that by Preaching to them he might perfect that which was lacking in their faith.

Ver. 11. *Now God himself and our father, and our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way unto you.*

The Apostle having but made mention (*v. 10.*) of his usual practice in praying, doth here, in the third part of the Chapter, break out in a most fervent and devout prayer, and thereby maketh way for the second principal part of this Epistle, which beginneth *chap. 4.* In which prayer, there is first, the party to whom he prayeth, *God himself*, taken here personally, for the first person, therefore is it added *Our Father*, and he is contradistinguished to Christ *Jesus our Lord*, the second person, to whom also the Apostle prayeth. 2. There is the matter prayed for, 1. That all Obstacles and impediments being removed, he might get a successful journey, and be directed by providence, as in a right line, towards them, as the word in the original doth signifie. *Dott. 1.* So necessary, and of so universal use, is this duty of prayer, that our heart should be constantly kept in such a readiness to it, that when ever the least opportunity is offered, we may set about it: yea and where a man is fervent in prayer, he will lay hold upon every

every occasion to break out in it: for, *Paul* having but made mention of Prayer, *1. 10.* and seeing some necessity of praying presently, cannot contain himself, but sets about it: *now God himself and our father, &c.* 2. That *Jesus Christ* is God equal with the Father, appeareth hence, that not only divine worship, but also divine properties, in over-ruling by his providence the affairs of men, are ascribed to him: for, *Paul* doth pray unto him, and seeketh a successful journey from him: *Our Lord Jesus Christ direct our way.* 3. Though the object of divine worship be but one and the same glorious God, *Mark. 4. 10.* and there is but one kind of divine worship, to wit, that which is supremum, and becometh this one infinite majesty of God, and therefore whatever person of the Godhead be expressly named in our prayers, the rest are not excluded, but included in that one, they being all three one only God, the same in essence, *1 Joh. 5. 7.* yet it is not only lawful, but also sometimes convenient, (though not alwayes necessary) to name expressly in our prayers the distinct persons, and especially *Jesus Christ* the second person with the Father, thereby to strengthen our confidence for acceptation and an answer, seeing there is no access to the Father but by him, *Joh. 14. 6.* for, *Paul* here doth expressly direct his prayer both to the Father and the Son: *Now God himself and the Father, and our Lord Jesus Christ.* 4. The Lords most powerful providence, doth over-rule the most malicious designs of Satan against his work and people, so that he could easily mar the prosecution



of them, when at their greatest height, if  
 he did not sometimes judge the contrary more con-  
 venient, for his own glory and his peoples good.  
*Psalm 76. 10.* for *Paul* could not otherwise pray  
 in faith unto *God* for a successful journey, when  
 he knew *Satan* did ply his utmost to hinder it.  
*Chap. 2. 18.* *new God himself direct our way* we  
 re *our*, faith his. Seeing it is not in man to  
 direct his own way, *Jer. 10. 23.* therefore he  
 ought to wait and depend on *Gods* direction, for  
 all his undertakings: and this both for light, that  
 he may know what, when, and how he should do,  
*Psalm 27. 11.* and for strength, to enable him for  
 and bear him through, against difficulties in the  
 performances, *Eph. 3. 16.* for to doth *Pauls* new  
*God himself* ~~not~~ direct our way unto you. *1st* and  
*honor* ~~villains~~ ~~so~~ ~~burden~~ ~~Gods ~~to~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~1st~~  
*Ver. 12.* And the Lord make you so increase and  
 abound in love one towards another, and towards  
 all men, even as we do towards you. *1st* ~~the~~ ~~do~~  
~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~grace~~ ~~and~~ ~~duties~~ ~~of~~ ~~love~~ ~~first~~ ~~one~~ ~~to~~ ~~another~~ ~~and~~ ~~among~~ ~~themselves~~ ~~who~~ ~~were~~ ~~Chri-~~  
 A second thing he prayed for, is, that whether  
 he came unto them or not, the Lord himself might  
 supply his absence, by making them grow abun-  
 dantly, and beyond all ordinary measure (as the  
 doubling of the word, *increase* and *abound*, doth  
 imply) in the grace and duties of love, first, *one*  
*to another*, and among themselves who were Chri-  
 tians: next, generally *towards all men*, even  
 Heathens. And in the close of the verse, he casts  
 in one incitement to the exercise of this grace,  
 from his own example and practice towards them.  
*Doct. 1.* Though the Lord doth usually work by  
 ordinary~~

ordinary means; yet we may not eye him abso-  
lutely to them, but under want of means ought  
to depend upon him, to supply their lack: for  
*Paul* depends on God, for making them grow in  
love, even though he himself should not come to  
them: *And the Lord make you to increase.* 2. As  
not only the first beginnings, but also the growth  
and progress of grace do come from God, and  
therefore are to be sought from him by prayer.  
So we need not fear, while we plead with God  
for spiritual mercies, lest we exceed and seek too  
much: for, *Paul* seeketh that he may make them  
grow abundantly, and beyond all ordinary mea-  
sure: *and the Lord make you increase and  
abound.* 3. As it should be a believers aime to  
grow in grace: so he should labour in this study  
after growth, both to extend himself to the exer-  
cise of more graces, as is enjoined, 2 Pet. 1. 5.  
and to better the exercise of one and the same  
grace, so as to grow more frequent, copious, and  
spiritual in it, as is enjoined, chap. 5. 16, 17. for,  
*Pauls* praying for growth shews, we should en-  
deavour it, and the two words he useth to express  
this growth are made by some to differ thus, that  
the first may signifie to increase in number, the  
second in heap or bulk: *now the Lord make you  
to increase and abound in love.* 4. As Christian  
love ought, and will be mutual among real Chri-  
stians: So it is not mercenary, nor doth extend it  
self unto those only from whom the Christian may  
expect a return of love again, but to others also,  
from whom nothing of that kind can be had, even  
to all men; and that because of Gods command,

*Matth.*

*Matth. 5. 44.* and that there is somewhat love-worthy in all, *Rom. 2. 15.* though abused and defaced by the most, *Rom. 1. 21.* for, he prayeth that they, being Christians, may abound in love, first, towards one another, and next, towards all men. 5. A Minister's own example, and sanctified practice, according to the truth he preacheth, is one of the strong inducements unto a people to give him obedience in what he prescribeth: and therefore though a profane man may preach to purpose, *Matth. 7. 22, 23.* yet his preaching is not usually so much accompanied with fruit and success, *1 Tim. 4. 16.* for, Paul alleadgeth his own practice, as an inducement: *even as we do towards you,* saith he.

*Ver. 13. To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness before God, even our Father, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints.*

Here is a third thing prayed for, in order to which their growing in love was presently sought, as it appears from the word of connexion betwixt the verses: and it is, that thereby, as by one mean, the Lord might first, confirm and establish them in holiness, so that they should not be easily moved, or driven from the solid practice of it. And next, that by both those, to wit, their growth in love, and stability in holiness, their hearts or consciences (so called, *1 Joh. 3. 19, 20.*) might be rendred blameless, or without complaint, (as it may be well taken in an active sense) his meaning

ing is, that their consciences may be pacified, yea and absolve, and pass sentence in their favours, and this before the bar and tribunal of God their reconciled father, the full accomplishment of which wish should be at *Christs* second coming, when he shall come accompanied with all his Saints, or ( as the original may read ) his holy ones, that is, either his holy Angels, 2 *Thes.* 1. 7. or the holy souls of the Saints departed, who shall come down with Christ, to be united and glorified with their bodies. See the same effect of pacifying the conscience ascribed to growth love, 1 *John* 3. 19. and 4. 18. and it is ascribed to love and holiness, as to that which doth evidence our interest in Christs blood, *John* 13. 35. by the only merit and worth whereof we have peace with God, *Rom.* 5. 1. *Doct.* 1. Though Children, and those who are weak in grace, be tossed to and fro with every temptation, *Ephes.* 4. 14. yet grown, and growing Christians, are not so easily shaken : Growth in Grace is accompanied with stability, both in truth and holiness : for, *Paul* teacheth so much, while having prayed, v. 12. for growth in grace, he addeth here, *To the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.* 2. It concerneth a Christian much, by all means to endeavour that his heart and conscience may be without complaint, speak peace unto him and absolve him ; seeing if a mans heart and conscience upon good ground condemn him, much more will God, who is greater than the heart, and whose deputy the conscience is, 1 *Joh.* 3. 20. for, *Paul* prayeth here that their hearts, or consciences, may be unblameable and without complaint.

plaint. 3. As a man, in making his heart and conscience pass sentence upon his state and way, should sit himself in Gods sight, and endeavour that his conscience pass such a sentence upon all, as he thinks God the Judge of all will pass: So in this enquiry and process, he should look upon God as a fatherly Judge, who will pass sentence as a Father, according to the Covenant of Grace, and not as a strict sin-pursuing Judge, according to the Covenant of Works: for, he wishes that *their hearts* may be *unblameable* or without complaint *before God*, that is, when sifted as In his sight, and calleth him *our Father*, to shew in what relation he should be taken up. 4. Though it be the alone blood of Christ apprehended by faith that purifieth the conscience, and gives it ground to absolve and speak peace; seeing by it alone provoked Justice is satisfied, and we are justified, whereupon our peace with God doth follow, *Rom. 5. 1.* yet inherent holiness doth also quiet the conscience in its own order and way, to wit, though not meritoriously, and by way of satisfaction to the claim of justice, for all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags, *Isa. 64. 6.* yet by way of evidence, and as a faithful witness of our undoubted interest in Christ, and right to his blood, *1 Joh. 3. 14.* for, *Paul* prayeth that *their hearts* or consciences may be *unblameable*, without complaint, or pacified in holiness. 5. Though the meanest measure of sincere holiness be a sufficient evidence in it self of an interest in Christ, and consequently may quiet the conscience, *Mat. 5. 6.* yet that a man may clearly discern this evidence, and get his conscience actually, and upon good ground

ground quiet by it, it's necessary that he grow in grace, and be established in holiness, otherwise his peace is more lyable to be questioned and shaken by every new assault: for, *Paul* ascribeth this effect of pacifying the conscience to growth in grace, and stability in holiness, while having prayed for their growing in grace, he addeth, *to the end he may stablish your hearts unblameable in holiness.* 6. However believers do enjoy much sweet peace, *Rom.* 5. 1. and some clear evidences of a right to Christ in their begun sanctification, even while they are here, *1 Cor.* 6. 3. yet the full accomplishment of their begun happiness is reserved until Christs second coming: Many things are wanting now, even to those who have most, *2 Cor.* 6. 6. which shall be then made up: Our holiness shall then be perfected, and we confirmed in it, our peace extended as a river, neither shall our consciences afterwards ever smite or accuse: for, he sheweth, the term, when we shall be fully established in holiness, and our consciences thoroughly pacified, shall be *at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, with all his Saints.*

CHAP.

## CHAP. IV.



THE Apostle being, in the second principal part of this Epistle, until v. 23. of chap. 5. to press upon them the practice of an holy life, he doth in the first part of this Chapter propone several exhortations to that purpose. The first is, to the study of holiness and sanctification in general, v. 1. inforced, 1. From his manifold injunctions of this kind, he had given them already, v. 2. 2. It was the will of God that they should so walk, v. 3. Next, the following exhortations do press their exercise of some particular vertues, and branches of that sanctification presently mentioned: As 1. the exercise of chastity, v. 4. and abstinence from all uncleanness contrary to it, v. 3, 5. 2. The exercise of Justice and equity, in abstinence from all sort of oppression. And both these are inforced, because, 1. Otherwise God would plague them, v. 6. Next from the end of their calling, to wit, their sanctification, v. 7. Thirdly their disobedience would be a despising of God, v. 8. The third exhortation is to the exercise of brotherly love, which he presseth indirectly from their progress herein already, v. 9, 10. And 4. he exhorts to quietness of spirit, opposite to Idleness and curiosity, v. 11. Because 1. of publick honesty; 2. Of private utility, v. 12.

In the second part of the Chapter, he propones several

several considerations to allay immoderate grief for the death of friends: As 1. their death is but a sleep, v. 13. 2. They shall undoubtedly arise, v. 14. 3. They shall be in no worse case at Christs second coming than the Godly, who shall be then found alive, v. 15. yea they shall have the advantage of them, as being to be first raised, and before those; others shall be changed, v. 16. 4. After their resurrection the Godly of both sorts shall meet together, and both of them with Christ. 5. They shall never part again, v. 17. And so he concludes, by pointing at the use which they were to make of all those considerations, v. 18.

Ver. 1. **F**urthermore, then we beseech you, brethren, and exhort you by the Lord Jesus, that as ye have received of us how ye ought to walk, and to please God, so ye would abound more and more.

He doth here, and to v. 3. propone and urge a general exhortation, which is a comprehensive summ of all the rest, which he is to press upon them afterward. And having made a transition from the preceding doctrine, by the word *furthermore* (implying, as the original beareth, there did somewhat yet remain necessary to be added) he doth in the name and authority of the Lord Jesus, and for his sake exhort them, and that both lovingly (as the word rendred, *beseech*, implyeth) and seriously, as his using two words to the same purpose doth import. And the thing unto which he exhorts them is, that according to the doctrine



and injunctions they had formerly received of him, while he was with them, pointing out both the necessity and manner of such a walk and conversation, as might be acceptable unto and please the Lord; so they would abound, more and more, that is, supposing they had already entred this walk (as is expressly affirmed, *chap. 1. v. 3.*) he would have them now to make continual progress, and in a manner to outstrip themselves by their future diligence. Besides what I have observed already upon the cohesion of the doctrinal and practical part of the Epistle to the *Ephesians*, *chap. 4. v. 1. doct. 1, 2.* which is applicable here: Learn 1. The endeavours of others, by prayer or otherwayes, to have us doing well, should not hinder, but rather further our own diligence and pains: and particularly our own prayers, or the prayers of others to God on our behalf, should be seconded by diligent use of means on our part, for attaining the good thing prayed for, otherwise we tempt the Lord by our prayers, as the sluggard, *Prov. 21, 25.* and make the prayers of others wholly ineffectual, as to the bringing about of any good unto us, *Psal. 35. 13.* for, *Paul* having prayed fervently, that the Lord would make them abound in grace, *chap. 2. 12.* he doth here press upon themselves to abound more and more, and because he prayed for it, therefore he would have them to endeavour it, as appears by the illative particle, *then*, or *therefore*: furthermore *then*. 2. When a Minister hath with greatest clearness, and fulness explicated, and laid open the doctrinal part of Christian Religion, and the several articles of faith, he hath

bath not yet absolved his task, until he press upon peoples consciences the practice of piety and of the several duties of an holy life : And whatever a man be for knowledge, yet there is one thing, and the main thing lacking, so long as he knows not, or cares not, how to bring his knowledge into practice ; his knowledge in that case is to no purpose, as not having attained the end for which it is given, *Act. 2. 11, 12.* for, *Paul* having already instructed them in the doctrinal part of Religion, and exhorted them to constancy in it, he looks upon somewhat yet wanting and necessary to be added, even the following directions to lead an holy life : *furthermore then, or, as to that which yet rests, we beseech you.* 3. A Minister, especially in pressing the practice of holy duties upon the people of his charge, should labour to be both affectionate and serious, so that neither his affection and respect unto them may marr his vehemency and fervor, in pressing home the point upon their conscience, nor yet his zeal and fervour make him omit any thing, whereby sanctified prudence might teach him to evidence his affection to them and respect of them, lest otherwise by exasperating their corruption he drive them further from their duty, instead of bringing them nearer to it : for *Paul*, while he presseth duty, doth not command imperiously, but intreats them meekly and affectionately, as the word rendered *beseech* implyeth, and yet most seriously and fervently, he both *beseecheth and exhorteth.* 4. A Ministers meekness and lenity ought to be seasoned with some mixture of authority and due severity, lest otherwise his meekness

be despised, and his Ministry want an edge : for, as *Paul* beseecheth them in lenity, so he obtests them by the Lord *Jesus*, that is, in his name and authority, and for his sake. 5. Though good works, and an holy walk, be not necessary antecedents of Justification, *Rom.* 4. 5. yet they are of necessity required in the person now justified, to wit, for making his calling and election sure, *2 Pet.* 1. 10. for making evident the reality of his faith and interest in Christ, *Jam.* 2. 18. for glorifying God, *Joh.* 15. 8. for gaining of others, *Matth.* 5. 16. for attaining the actual possession of life eternal, as the way to it, *Heb.* 12. 14. though not as a price to merit or buy it, *Rom.* 6. 23. for, the word in the original, rendered *how ye ought to walk*, doth signifie how ye *must of necessity* walk. 6. That a man may walk as a Christian, and so as to please the Lord, he must take the revealed will of God, delivered by his Prophets and Apostles, and committed by them to sacred writ, for his guide, both in the matter and manner of his walk : for, *Paul* teacheth so much, while he saith, that *as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye should abound*, now what they had received of him, to this purpose, by his Preaching, he doth here commit the summe of it to writing. 7. Whatever be a mans walk and conversation for matter, or otherwise for manner ; yet he walks not as a Christian, nor so as he can have any real or solid comfort in his walk, except he sincerely endeavour to please the Lord, by doing what he doth as service to him, *Eph.* 6. 6, 7. for, *Paul* makes their endeavour to please God, a necessary

necessary ingredient in a Chriſtian walk, while he ſaith, *how ye ought to walk, and to pleaſe God.* 8. There is not a reſt, or ſtand, allowed of God to any in the way of grace, but when much is attained, we ought ſtill (forgetting thoſe things which are behind, *Phil. 3. 13.*) enlarge our deſires, and bend our endeavour after more, and yet after more, ſeeing there is ſtill more to be had, *Phil. 3. 13.* and the Lord alloweth our deſires after grace to be inſatiable and boundleſs, *Joh. 16. 23, 24.* though as to our other enjoyments, he would have them bounded by his allowance, *Heb. 13. 5.* for, *Paul* ſuppoſing they had already grace, and a great meaſure of it, doth nevertheless exhort them to *abound more and more.*

Ver. 2. *For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jeſus.*

Here is a reaſon to inforce the exhortation.

1. The thing required by him now, was nothing elſe, but what he had enjoyned them formerly.  
2. Thoſe directions he gave them were not his own, but the *Lord Chriſts*, in whoſe name and authority, he as Chriſts Lyon-herauld had proclaimed them; for the Greek word ſignifieth ſuch a commandment, as is publiſhed by one in the name and authority of another, and ſo much alſo is expreſſed, while he ſaith *by the Lord Jeſus*, or in his name. Laſtly, they did know, and were ſufficiently convinced, both that he had given thoſe commandments, and that they were not his, but Chriſts.

*Doct. 1.* As Miniſters ought not to forbear the fre-

be despised, and his Ministry want an edge : for, as *Paul* beseecheth them in lenity, so he obtests them by the Lord *Jesus*, that is, in his name and authority, and for his sake. 5. Though good works, and an holy walk, be not necessary antecedents of Justification, *Rom.* 4. 5. yet they are of necessity required in the person now justified, to wit, for making his calling and election sure, *2 Per.* 1. 10. for making evident the reality of his faith and interest in Christ, *Jam.* 2. 18. for glorifying God, *Joh.* 15. 8. for gaining of others, *Matth.* 5. 16. for attaining the actual possession of life eternal, as the way to it, *Heb.* 12. 14. though not as a price to merit or buy it, *Rom.* 6. 23. for, the word in the original, rendered *how ye ought to walk*, doth signifie how ye *must of necessity* walk. 6. That a man may walk as a Christian, and so as to please the Lord, he must take the revealed will of God, delivered by his Prophets and Apostles, and committed by them to sacred writ, for his guide, both in the matter and manner of his walk : for, *Paul* teacheth so much, while he saith, that *as ye have received of us, how ye ought to walk and to please God, so ye should abound*, now what they had received of him, to this purpose, by his Preaching, he doth here commit the summ of it to writing. 7. Whatever be a mans walk and conversation for matter, or otherwise for manner ; yet he walks not as a Christian, nor so as he can have any real or solid comfort in his walk, except he sincerely endeavour to please the Lord, by doing what he doth as service to him, *Eph.* 6. 6, 7. for, *Paul* makes their endeavour to please God, a necessary

necessary ingredient in a Christian walk, while he saith, *how ye ought to walk, and to please God*, 8. There is not a rest, or stand, allowed of God to any in the way of grace, but when much is attained, we ought still (forgetting those things which are behind, *Phil. 3. 13.*) enlarge our desires, and bend our endeavour after more, and yet after more, seeing there is still more to be had, *Phil. 3. 13.* and the Lord alloweth our desires after grace to be insatiable and boundless, *Joh. 16. 23, 24.* though as to our other enjoyments, he would have them bounded by his allowance, *Heb. 13. 5.* for, *Paul* supposing they had already grace, and a great measure of it, doth nevertheless exhort them to *abound more and more.*

Ver. 2. *For ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.*

Here is a reason to inforce the exhortation.

1. The thing required by him now, was nothing else, but what he had enjoyned them formerly.  
2. Those directions he gave them were not his own, but the *Lord Christs*, in whose name and authority, he as Christs Lyon-herauld had proclaimed them; for the Greek word signifieth such a commandment, as is published by one in the name and authority of another, and so much also is expressed, while he saith *by the Lord Jesus*, or in his name. Lastly, they did know, and were sufficiently convinced, both that he had given those commandments, and that they were not his, but Christs.

*Doct. 1.* As Ministers ought not to forbear the frequent

quent repetition of one and the same truths, until they obtain from people their due acceptance, though still with some delectable variety, in some circumstances of their delivery, lest otherwise they become loathed of the hearers: So the more that a duty is inculcate, we are the more obliged to take notice of it, and will have the more of guilt if we neglect and slight it: for, *Paul* presseth obedience to the former exhortation, from this, that he had frequently pressed it before as well as now: *for ye know what commandments we gave you.* 2. As the Lords Ministers ought to deliver nothing for a rule of faith or manners unto their hearers, but what they have a warrant for from Christ, for they are but Ministers of Christ, and publishers of his will to his people, and not Lords of their faith, *2 Cor.* 1. 24. So the Lords people should receive nothing of their hand, but that for which they can produce such a warrant: for, the injunctions which *Paul* gave them, and they were to receive from him, were only such, *the commandments which he gave them by the Lord Jesus.* 3. The more we know our duty, and are convinced of a yoke laid on by God himself to walk in it, the greater should be our care to make conscience of it; otherwise our knowledge will be our condemnation, *Joh.* 3. 19. and we see sin without all cloak or excuse, *Joh.* 15. 22. for the strength of this present argument lyeth in their knowledge: *for ye know what commandments we gave you by the Lord Jesus.*

Ver. 3. *For this is the will of God, even your sanctification, that ye should abstain from fornication.*

In this verse, he doth first declare, what that is wherein he did exhort them to abound, v. 1. to wit, *sanctification*, which being taken as it is our duty, is a serious and constant endeavour after a full and through conformity, of the whole man, both outward and inward, *Jam. 4. 8.* to what the Lord requireth in his word. And he addeth also a new argument, to enforce the exhortation so explained, to wit, It is Gods will, or the thing which he requireth, as well-pleasing unto him. Next being to press upon them some particular branches of sanctification, he begins with chastity: In pressing whereof, he first exhorts them to *abstain* from the contrary vice, to wit, *fornication*; which is to be taken here generally, as extended to all filthiness and uncleanness contrary to chastity, and thus it comprehends adultery, *Matth. 5. 32.* yea and incest, *1 Cor. 5. 1.* *Doct. 1.* This may sufficiently commend a duty, and set us upon the practice of it, that it is willed and commanded of God, what ever otherwise be the reluctancy, and vain debates of flesh and blood against it, *Gal. 1. 16.* It holdeth good in his commands alone, they are not to be disputed, but obeyed, and his will to be simply followed, without further enquiry in the grounds and reasons of it, except where those are held forth unto us by the Lord himself: for, he holds out the Lords will as a sufficient reason to



press the present exhortation : *for this is the will of God*, saith he. 2. The duties of sanctification are no less willed, and enjoined by God to believers, than the exercise of faith it self : faith in Christ doth not loose the tye of the command, and will of God binding us to duty : for, writing to believers, he saith, *This is the will of God even your sanctification*. 3. A Ministers wisdom should lead him, in pressing holiness, not to rest upon generals, but to condescend upon such particulars of sin and duty, ( by dissuading from the one, and inciting to the other ) the omission or commission whereof is most common among the people of his charge : for so doth *Paul*, having pressed sanctification in the general, he descends unto some particular duties, and such doubtless, as the present condition of that people did give him the occasion to pitch upon beyond others : *That ye abstain from fornication*, saith he. 4. As sanctification includeth not only the practice of duty, but also the mortification of, and abstinence from sin : so there are no sins that an holy heart will scare more at, and strive to mortifie, than those to which his fleshly appetite would enslave him ; such sins being not only insnaring when given way to ( *Eccles. 7. 26.* ) because most delightful, but also most inconsistent with, at least most destructive of, the work of grace in the heart, 1 *Pet. 2. 11.* for, the Apostle doth press abstinence from fornication, as a main branch of sanctification : *That ye abstain from fornication*, saith he.

Ver. 4. *That everyone of you should know how to possess his vessel in sanctification and honour.*

In pressing chastity, he doth next prescribe a remedy against the forementioned sin, and thereby enjoyneth the exercise of the contrary vertue, to wit, *That every one of them*, without exception, *should* not only abstain from fornication, but also *know*, and acquaint themselves, how they might by an holy kind of skill and artifice, *possess*, or make use of their body, here called their *vessel*, or an instrument of any sort ( as the word is generally taken ) because the body is the instrument of the soul, by which it acts; a vessel or receptacle wherein for the time it is preserved. And the manner how they were to possess it, and make right use of it, is in two words, none whereof do exclude the lawful use of the marriage-bed, *Heb. 13. 4.* but it is,

1. In *Sanctification*, that is, not only in freedom from fleshly pollutions, but also in making all the members of the body subservient to the soul, in all those offices for which they are appointed, and chiefly in the practice of holy duties, *Rom. 6. 19.*
2. In *honour*, that is, not so much, or only by taking lawful and necessary care, to provide all things needful for the body ( though that be not excluded, see upon *Col. 2. 23.* ) but also and mainly, by preserving it in that measure of purity and freedom, from every kind of sinful defilement, which is suitable to that honour put on it by God, of being made a temple to the Holy Ghost, *1 Cor. 6. 15.* he seemeth to allude to that more than ordinary cleanliness

ness and purity, wherein these Vessels were kept, which were dedicate to the service of God in the sanctuary, *Exod. 40. 9, 10. Doct. 1.* The Lord requireth not only inward sanctity, in the understanding, will and affections, but also outward in the body and all its members: And therefore it is not sufficient for us to know our duty, and have some inward good liking of it, the outward man in the mean time being left at liberty, and as it were without a rule, to do or not do as may make most for the mans safety from hazard, for his pleasure, credit or advantage: for, *Paul* seemeth to obviate the error of some, who thought otherwise, while he requireth every man to possess his vessel or body in sanctification. 2. The Moral Law, and more particularly the Law enjoyning chastity, and keeping the soul and body free from fleshly lusts, doth oblige all and every one, without exception of any, to obedience; so that neither great, *Deut. 17. 17.* nor small, *Deut. 23. 17.* man nor woman, *Jam. 4. 4.* young nor old, *1 Cor. 7.* may plead exemption: for, the command is given to every one, *That every one should know, how to possess his vessel.* 3. There is a kind of Divine art of chastity, and no small skill required, to keep a mans soul and body free from fleshly uncleanness: Some rules of which Heavenly art, are briefly these. The outward senses must be kept from enticing objects, *Job 31. 1.* loose and wanton company eschewed, *Prov. 5. 8.* meat, drink, and sleep soberly used, *Ezek. 16. 49.* our ordinary

nary callings diligently plyed, *Ezek. 16. 49.* the first motions and stirrings within of fleshly lust quickly suppressed, *Exod. 20. 17.* Prayer to God, for strength to resist tentations, frequently used, *Matth. 26. 41.* and if none of those prevail, marriage, the means appointed of God for eschewing fornication, must be entred, *1 Cor. 7. 2.* for, *Paul* implyeth that there is skill and knowledge required for this thing, while he saith, *That every one of you should know how to possess.* 4. As every man ought to possess his own body, or be master of it, and not be possessed by it, or enslaved to it, by spending his precious time in an excessive pampering of it, with meat, drink, sleep, *Ezek. 16. 49.* or gorgeous rayment, *Isa. 3. 18, &c.* So doth he possess it as he ought, when not only he doth not yield his members servants unto uncleanness, or to iniquity of any sort, *Rom. 6. 19.* but also doth subject it to God, and keep it subservient, as an instrument of the renewed soul, in giving obedience to the revealed will of God : for, this is it that *Paul* teacheth, while he biddeth every man possess, or make use of his body, as a vessel, or instrument of the soul, and in sanctification and ho-  
nour.

Ver. 5. *Not in the lust of concupiscence, even as the Gentiles which know not God.*

He doth thirdly, in pressing chastity, shew how far that abstinence from fornication, mentioned v. 3. doth reach, even to a restraining not only the external act, but also the inward lust of concupiscence, or as the word signifieth the feverish fit, or violent passion of burning desire, which boyleth within, through all the members of the body, 1 Cor. 7. 9. disturbing the judgement, as with a high fit of a Fever, and provoking both body and mind to the outward act of filthiness. And fourthly, he gives a reason enforcing the disswasive, lest otherwise they should be like the prophane *gentiles*, who were for the most part given over of God to the base slavery of their filthy lusts: and that because they *knew not God*, to wit, savingly, and as he is revealed in his word; neither did they rightly improve that natural knowledge, which they had of him, and therefore God gave them up to uncleanness, Rom. 1. 21. with 24. *Dott. 1.* As concupiscence, and the first inordinate motions to lust, when not timeously curbed, do become passionate, inflaming the body, and restraining the judgement from solid thoughts of any other thing, but of what may tend to fulfil them: So such violent passions, and feverish fits of fleshly concupiscence, do put both the body and mind out of frame, for discharging any duty of holiness in a way honourable to God: for, he sheweth that *concupiscence* groweth to *lust*, or

to a violent passion, and a kind of phrensie, as the word implyeth, and that the prevalency of this passion and lust, as opposite to that possessing the body in sanctification and honour, mentioned v. 4. *not in the lust of concupiscence*, saith he. 2. As there is need of the former Divine art, mentioned v. 4. *doct.* 3. to allay and root out those Fevorish fits of burning lust: So except they be one way or other allayed, a man cannot possess his body, as master of it, but is in daily hazard to be trailed as a slave, to fulfil the utmost of those fleshly lusts, which are burning in it: for, while he requireth every one to know, *how to possess his body not in the lust of concupiscence*, he implyeth, that otherwise he is not a full possessor of it, and that there is skill and knowledge required unto a man, for keeping his body free of those boiling passions. 3. As there are several degrees of one and the same sin, the former whereof maketh way to the latter: So then do we set against a sin to purpose, when we not only lop the utmost branches, or set our selves to refrain from the outward act, but also to restrain the inward motions and desires of the heart after it: for, he will have them to set against the inward *lust*, or passion, *of concupiscence*, as the most ready mean of abstinence from the breaking out of concupiscence in the outward act of fornication spoken of v. 3. *Doct.* 4. The sight of sins prevalency in others, should not allure us to it, but much rather scare us from it, there being thereby occasion offered to get a more full and clear sight of the tyranny and loathsome filthiness of sin given way to, than can be attained by the hearing of the ear,  
and

and word-speaking : for; therefore doth he set before them the prevalency of this sin among the Pagan-Gentiles, to scare them from it : *even as the Gentiles*, saith he. 5. As that is only worthy to be called the knowledge of God, which is operative upon the heart and affections : So ignorance of God is a woful root, from whence many other sins do spring up ; The Lord sometimes judicially giving the ignorant person over to those other sins, as a just punishment for his affected ignorance ; Besides, that the knowledge of God which we ought to have, includeth the knowledge of our duty, wherein we honour him being so known, and therefore they who know not God cannot but sin, as not knowing whereat they stumble : for although the Pagan-Gentiles had some knowledge of God, yet because their knowledge was not operative and effectual, he affirms simply they knew him not, and makes their ignorance the cause of their uncleanness : *even as the Gentiles which know not God.* 6. Though the child of God is not bound to abstain from every thing which unrenewed men practise, for even they may do some things which are in themselves, and materially good, *Rom. 2. 14.* yet as they should eschew every sinful practice of others, so especially such practises, as are speaking evidences of their living in their unrenewed state : for, *Paul* d'swades them from living in the lust of uncleanness, because this was the practice of the unrenewed Gentiles, and such a practice as did demonstrate they knew nothing of God savingly, and as they ought : *even as the Gentiles*, saith he, *which know not God.*

Ver. 6. That no man go beyond and defraud his brother in any matter: because that the Lord is the avenger of all such, as we also have forewarned you, and testified.

He doth here press a second branch of that sanctification, spoken of v. 1. The exhortation is first proponed, to this sense; That in no matter, or in no business of common commerce, they should wrong their brother, either by open violence (as the word rendred *go beyond* implyeth, it signifieth to go above, or trample upon one as despicable, and so expresseth to the life the nature and way of proud and insolent oppressours) nor yet by secret fraud and *deceit* (as the other word is expressly rendred, see also 2 Cor. 7. 2.) and the party whom they are discharged to oppress or deceive, is their brother, that is, one of the same Religion with them, Deut. 17. 15. whereby he meaneth not as if it were lawful to oppress others (see the contrary, Exod. 22. 21.) but because the most of their traffick and commerce being probably with Christians and among themselves, the consideration of their interest in the person injured by them would add no small weight to their sin, 1 Cor. 6. 6. Next he addeth a reason to enforce not only this dissuasive, but the former v. 5. and it's taken from one dreadful effect of all such sins, they lay open the person guilty to Gods dreadful vengeance: and he confirmeth the truth hereof from this, that he had often told them so much before when he was with them, and not only simply told, but seriously testified,



sed, and earnestly obtested them to believe the truth of what he had deponed, as it were upon oath unto them, for so much doth the word imply. *Doct. 1.* The wise Lord hath judged it fitting so to dispense of things worldly unto mankind, not giving all things needful unto any one, as that men cannot live without mutual commerce, and exchange of commodities from one hand to another: for, he suppones the necessity of mutual commerce while he forbiddeth oppression and deceit in it: *that no man go beyond his brother in any matter, or in any business of common commerce.* 2. So covetous is man by nature of that which is his neighbours, and so little willing to reverence the Lord in the measure of things worldly dispensed unto him, *Isa. 5. 8.* that he is easily tempted to catch advantage of his Neighbour in the matter of commerce, and to make up his own worldly estate by impairing the estate of others: for *Paul*, while he forbiddeth this evil, supponeth that men are prone to fall in it: *That no man go beyond or defraud his brother.* 3. So enslaving an evil is covetousness, that where it reigneth it maketh the covetous wretch imploy the utmost, both of his power and skill to give it satisfaction: for *Paul*, while he forbids both going beyond, or oppressing by power, and defrauding by skill, implyeth that both power and skill is usually imployed for carrying on this sin: *That no man go beyond or defraud.* 4. So subtle a fisher and hunter after souls is Satan (*Eph. 6. 11.*) as that he hath several sorts of temptations according to the several tempers and abilities of people to insnare them with, in one and the same

same sin; So that when any are effronterly shame-  
less in wickedness, and love to be known and fear-  
ed as such, and have power to bear them out to  
act their villanies; he then tempts them to oppress  
avowedly; and with strong hand: and for others  
who either have not power, or good will to carry on  
their wickedness in open view, those he tempts to  
defraud or deceive, teaching them a way, how to  
sin, and not to be so easily discovered in their sin;  
for, *Paul* supposes there were tentations of both  
those kinds, while he forbids to yield to either:  
*That no man go beyond or defraud his brother.*  
5. Whatever pretexes a man may find out to rep-  
rander one sin, and especially his own sin, more plau-  
sible and excusable than another; yet no pretext of  
that kind can licentiate a man to live in any sin,  
neither the open oppressour who pretends plain  
even down dealing, and kything himself to be what  
he is, nor yet the subtle deceiver who pretends law  
and fait bargain, are excuseable, but both of them  
are alike guilty before the Lord: for both are  
here condemned. *That no man go beyond or de-  
fraud his brother.* 6. As impunity from men doth  
harden the wicked much in sin: So the Lord doth  
alwayes supply the defects of mans justice, by ta-  
king vengeance here or hereafter, especially upon  
those sins whereof Judges among men do take less  
notice: for, such are the sins here forbidden, flesh-  
ly uncleanness, oppression by the great, and subtle  
cheating under pretext of Law by the politick and  
worldly wise, are not much punished by men, hence  
are they so common: and therefore saith *Paul*,  
*The Lord is the avenger of all such.* 7. So strong

is the interest of sin in fallen man, and chiefly of such sins as bring worldly profit and pleasure with them, that there is need of word upon word, and reason upon reason, to scare him from them; and there must be not only love to the commander to constrain, but also the terrour of God to perswade: for, having given one argument *or* 3. to dissuade from those pleasant and profitable sins, from the signification of Gods will; he seeth it yet needful to add another here, from Gods vengeance and terrour, being to add more afterwards: *Because that the Lord is the avenger of all such*, saith he. 8. As where sin is, there Gods vengeance doth follow either upon the sinner himself, or a cautioner in his stead, 2 *Cor.* 3. 21. So the Lord doth allow a gracious soul, neither is it inconsistent with grace in the soul, to abstain from sin, as from other more prime, so from this inferiour motive, the fear of Gods vengeance to ensue and follow: for, he sheweth God doth avenge such sins, and dissuades even believers from them, because *he is the avenger of all such.* 9. A Minister must not think, that his once denouncing the terrour of divine vengeance against the sinner for his sin will scare him from it: neither must he give over the matter as hopeless, when his former dreadful certifications have had little or no effect, but he must yet again renew his zeal, reiterate former threatnings and other arguments, as not knowing when the Lord shall be pleased to give the wished for success, 2 *Tim.* 2. 25. for *Paul* reiterates this dreadful certification, though he had often told it before, and as it appears, without any success as to some: *As we also have*

So stupid are men for the most part, and so slow to believe the truth of divine threatenings, *Deut. 29. 19.* that if Ministers when they threaten be not the more serious and fervent, the most terrible threatening will but little affect the most part of hearers; Some one shift or other will be found out to put them by to break their dint, and to make them of no effect: for, therefore Paul, in denouncing this terrible threatening, did seriously testify, and fervently obtest them to take warning from it. *As we also have forewarned you and testified.*

*Ver. 7. For God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness.*

In this Verse, there is a second argument, for enforcing all the former exhortations, both general and particular, positive and negative: And it is taken from the end intended by God, when he did first effectually call them, that is, draw them out of nature to the state of grace, *Col. 1. 13.* which is expressed, first negatively, It was not that they might thence take liberty to defile themselves with sin of any kind; For the word, *uncleanness*, must be taken here in that general sense, as being opposed to sanctification, and containing under it all the sins formerly forbidden, not only fornication, which is *uncleanness*, strictly taken, but also oppression and fraud. Next positively, he had called them to sanctification, or that they might be sanctified, and live in the constant exercise of all the sanctifying graces of Gods Spirit.

*Dott.* 1. As God is a dreadful avenger of all sin, So chiefly of such sins of professors of the Gospel as do reflect upon their Christian calling, either as hardly consistent with it, *Deut.* 32. 5. or as opening the mouths of prophane Atheists to reproach it, *2 Sam.* 12. 14. for, he here gives this reason why God is the avenger of all such sins, God had called them to abstinence from them, and consequently their lying in them would reflect upon their calling: *for God hath not called us unto uncleanness*, saith he. 2. It is the duty of called Christians, in all their actions and employments, to examine all by the rule of their Christian calling, and to do or not do accordingly, being alwayes loth to do any thing which may in the least measure reflect upon it, though it should otherwise bring them never so much pleasure or advantage: for, he will have them to abstain from the flesh-pleasing sin of uncleanness, and the profitable sin of covetousness, fraud and oppression, upon this account, they were not according to the rule of their Christian calling: *for God hath not called us unto uncleanness*, saith he. 3. So averse are all men by nature from the duties of holiness, *Rom.* 8. 7. so impotent to go about them, as being dead in sins and trespasses, *Eph.* 2. 1. that the Lord must first draw us out of nature to the state of grace, and create in us a new heart and abilities to do good (*Ezek.* 36. 26.) when he effectually calleth us, before we mind holiness in earnest: *for, he hath called us* ——— *unto holiness*, saith he. 4. Though some do abuse grace unto wantonness, and pretend they may sin without fear, (when,

as they suppose, they are effectually called ) because the root of the matter is in them, and grace once received cannot be lost, *Rom. 6. 15.* yet, as such corrupt reasonings receive no encouragement, neither from the author of grace, the Holy God, nor from the end of bestowing grace, which is our sanctification and holiness : So if any externally called by the Ministry of the Gospel do live loosely or profanely, it should not in reason reflect upon this holy calling, but upon the persons themselves, who do not walk worthy of it and suitable unto it, ( as is enjoined, *Eph. 4. 1.* ) and thereby evidence the external call of the Gospel hath never received inward entertainment in their heart : for, *Paul* supposing some might have such perverse reasonings as those, doth here refute them as having no ground from our Christian calling, seeing it is *God* who calleth, and calleth not to uncleanness, but unto holiness.

Ver. 8. *He therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God, who hath also given unto us his holy Spirit.*

Followeth a third argument to press the same thing, and it's taken from the heinousness of their sin, if they should despise, reject, or set at nought ( as the word signifieth ) those wholesom Apostolical counsels and commands. They should hereby despise or reject, *not man*, to wit, only, or chiefly, *but God*, speaking in him and by him ; which he proveth from this, that *God* had given his holy Spirit, by whose guidance and assistance he had

gion to them the formentioned commands, *ad 2.* See the like expression for asserting the divine authority of what he wrote, *1 Cor. 2. 46. Dicit.* When Ministers have done their utmost in holding forth the beauty of holiness, and pressing by the strongest of reasons the practice of it upon peoples Consciences, there will be alwayes some so far from yielding obedience, that the more they are pressed to duty, they will be the more averse from it, and in the end prove profane mockers and despisers of all which can be said to that purpose: for, *Paul* after all his exhortations and reasons, supponeth there would be some such despisers, while he sets himself against them: *he therefore that despiseth.* 2. Though such prophane despisers of exhortations to duty, and of threatnings denounced in case of neglect of duty, do please themselves with vain thoughts that the Minister, a despicable man, is only their party, whose pleasure they do not regard, whose displeasure they do not fear, *Jer. 18. 18.* yet herein they are hugely mistaken, the great God is their party, he it is whom they despise, and who will reckon with them as setters at nought of him: for, so saith *Paul*, *he therefore that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God.* 3. So much are faithful Ministers owned of God in the discharge of their trust, that what respect or disrespect is put upon them, or the message which they carry, it is reckoned by him as put upon himself, and that because they are Ambassadors in his stead, *2 Cor. 5. 20.* *he that despiseth, despiseth not man, but God,* saith he. 4. The great reason for which a peoples carriage towards the message, and  
 person

person of their faithful Ministers, reflecteth upon God himself is, that they in discharge of their must do represent him, and all their regular actings are owned by him as his own: for, from what he spoke, *1. 7.* that the act of some Ministers, in calling sinners by the Ministry of the Gospel, (*2 Cor. 1. 2.*) is owned by God himself as his deed, he inferreth here, that therefore *he that despiseth, despiseth not man but God.* 5. Though faithful Ministers are men, and therefore both may and must be affected with injuries and affronts, put upon them by profane Atheists, while they set at nought their person, and reject their message, *Jer. 20. 2. 18.* yet the dishonour done thereby to God doth bear so much baulk in their minds, as if any disgrace put upon themselves, being compared with that, were not to be regarded, and not so much as once to be named; for though profane mockers despise the Ministers, yet so little is that comparatively valued by Paul, that he saith, *he that despiseth, despiseth not man but God.* 6. Though the contempt and disgrace cast even upon ordinary Ministers by slighting their message redoundeth to God, for the reasons given, *doct. 3. 4.* yet this did hold chiefly in the Apostles, and other penmen of holy Scripture, who were infallibly assisted in what they wrote, *2 Pet. 1. 21.* and in ordinary Ministers, but in so far as they follow their steps, and deliver nothing to the Lords people for truth but what they have warrant for in the written Word of God: for the reason here given is peculiar to the Apostles and other extraordinary office-bearers, who only had the holy Spirit



101 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*  
to guide them infallibly : who hath also given unto  
in his holy Spirit, saith he.

Ver. 9. *But as touching brotherly love, ye need not  
that I write unto you : for ye your selves are  
taught of God to love one another.*

10. *And indeed ye do it towards all the brethren  
which are in all Macedonia : but we beseech  
you, brethren, that ye increase more and more.*

He doth here press a third branch of sanctifica-  
tion, called brotherly love, which is that singular,  
and as it were native ( and therefore called bro-  
therly ) love and affection, testified by action,  
which ought to be and in some measure is, ( 1 Joh.  
3. 1. ) in Gods Children mutually, and one to ano-  
ther, for the reality or appearance of Gods grace  
in them, *Psal. 119. 63.* And he presseth the ex-  
ercise of this grace first, by commending them for  
their progress herein already, which was such that  
they had not so great need to have it pressed upon  
them as others ; for that the words must be under-  
stood not simply and absolutely ( as they sound )  
but comparatively ( as other Scriptural expressions  
of the like kind, *Joh. 9. 41. 1 Cor. 1. 17.* ) ap-  
pears from his pressing this same duty on them,  
v. — 10. which he would not have done if there  
had been no need at all for it. *Secondly*, By giv-  
ing a reason why it was not needful for him to  
write much to this purpose, because *they were  
taught of God to love one another*, that is, their  
hearts were powerfully inclined to the actual exer-  
cise

cise of this grace by the efficacious working of Gods Spirit, not without, but accompanying the outward Ministry of the word, *Ad. 16. 14.* for so is Gods teaching explained in opposition to mans, *Jer. 31. 33.* This is contained, *v. 9.* Thirdly, by further commending them, while he prooveth they were so taught of God, from the effect of his teaching, their real practice, and exercise of this grace towards all the Christians (here called *brethren*) in the Region of *Macedonia*, wherein *Thessalonica* was the chief City. And fourthly by exhorting them expressly, (notwithstanding their former progress) not only to persevere, but also to abound more and more in the exercise of that grace.

From *v. 9.* Learn 1. where sanctifying grace is wrought in the heart by God, there will not only be an abstaining from wrong, hurt and injury to our Neighbour, but there must and will be also, an inward propension, seconded with real endeavours to do him good, and help him forward both in his bodily, *Lev. 35. 25.* and spiritual estate, *1 Thes. 5. 11.* for, the Apostle having pressed abstinence from doing wrong to our neighbour, *v. 6.* as one branch of that sanctification mentioned, *v. 3.* he doth here enjoin the exercise of brotherly love, as another branch of the same grace: *But as touching brotherly love, &c.* 2. It is a singular piece of Ministerial prudence seasonably to commend what good they observe in the Lords people, and so to commend it as that thereby they be not rendred proud or secure, but strongly incited to make further progress in that good which they already

already have, and people ought to improve what commendation they receive from their faithful Pastors for the time and, otherwise it becomes their shame, *Matth. 16. 17.* compared with 22. For, *Paul* doth here commend the progress they had already made in the exercise of brotherly love, of purpose to incite them to further progress: *As touching brotherly love, ye need not that I write unto you,* saith he. 3. So apt are the best to be discouraged in good, *Heb. 12. 12.* and so much doth the known good opinion concerning some in the minds of others (especially of their faithful Pastors, *2 Cor. 8. 24.*) prevail with them for their incitement to do better, *Act. 26. 27, 28.* that as Ministers ought not to flatter any in an evil, *1 Thes. 2. 5.* so they should not rashly pass an hard sentence upon any, *2 Tim. 2. 24.* or reject the meekest appearance of good in them as counterfeit and naught, *Zech. 4. 10.* but should cherish the day of small things in the people of their charge, not only in charity believing, *1 Cor. 13. 7.* but also alleadging the best upon them, that hereby they may be incited, and in a manner constrained to do better: for, so doth *Paul* here: *As touching brotherly love ye need not that I write unto you.* 4. The Lords Ministers must not expect that all within their charge shall be alike docile, tractable and easie to be wrought upon, by powerful exhortations to holy duties, or all alike backward, dull and unteachable: There are usually some of both kinds, So that though some must have word upon word, and line upon line, and all to little purpose; *Isa. 28. 13.* yet there are others with

with whom less than that will prevail: for, such were those *Thessalonians*, so tractable, that *Paul* needed not take so much pains upon them, as upon others; *ye need not that I write unto you*, saith he. 5. That any are thus more docile and easie to be wrought upon than others, doth not proceed from any natural difference of a better or worse disposition; for all are by nature alike averse, and indisposed unto any thing which is spiritually good; *Rom. 8. 7.* but from the Lords effectual blessing upon the means of instruction towards some more than others: for, *Paul* gives this as a reason of their proficiency beyond others: *for ye your selves are taught of God*, saith he. 6. Though the Spirit of God, the inward teacher of his people, doth not teach immediately by enthusiasmes, dreams or raptures, without, and much less, contrary to the word; *Isa. 8. 20.* but in and by the use of second means, and especially by a sent Ministry, *Rom. 10. 15.* whose labours he doth effectually bless to the elect, and so doth inwardly teach them, *1 Cor. 15. 10.* yet where the Spirit of God doth thus effectually and inwardly teach; there is the less need of outward means, though there be alwayes some, even to the best, until their graces be made perfect in Heaven, *Eph. 4. 13.* only a little of outward means will do more good to such, than ten times more can do to others: In a word, those are easily taught whom God doth teach; and therefore though eminent abilities are much to be wished for in Ministers, *Tir. 1. 9.* yet we ought not to be so anxious about the weakness or eminency of gifts in them, as fervently desirous to have  
Gods

Gods teaching to come along with theirs : for, *Paul* shews that God by his teaching those *Thessalonians* had made them stand the less in need of being taught by him, while he saith, *ye need not that I write unto you, for ye your selves are taught of God.*

From v. 10. Learn 1. All those whom God doth teach do profit under his hand, he doth so teach as the wills of those who are taught by him are powerfully bowed, and actually inclined to practise and obey what he teacheth : and herein his teaching doth differ from mans, who can only inform the judgement, by clearing up things to the understanding, but cannot effectually determine the will to obey, *1 Cor. 3. 6.* for, *Paul* sheweth that the effect of Gods teaching them was their real practice : And *indeed ye do it*, saith he. 2. As Christian brotherly-love excludeth none, but is extended unto all who have real grace, or promising evidences thereof : So the great and main motive which draweth out this brotherly love to the party loved, is the reality or appearance of a gracious work in him, and not other by respects only, or mainly, as of kindred, friendship, or favours bestowed by them, *Maith. 5. 46.* for, he sheweth that they exercised their love to others under the notion of, or because they were, *brethren* ; and did extend it to all of that sort which were in all *Macedonia.* 3. Though the exercise of brotherly-love be a duty incumbent unto all equally, as to that which is inward of it, in the heart and affection, *1 Pet. 1. 22.* yet as to what is external, and especially as to its fruit or beneficence, in supplying

ing the outward fruits of the people of God, there is more or less required from several persons, according to the capacity in which the Lord hath put them to discharge it: for, *Thessalonica* being the chief City in that whole Region, and so most able to exercise beneficence, did extend their brotherly love, even as to this act of it doubtless, *to all the brethren in all Macedonia.* 4. It is a duty in a special manner incumbent unto those who are any way eminent in riches, power, or credit, whether they be Cities, Societies, or particular persons, to imploy their eminency as a shelter, help and encouragement to piety and those who are pious, in those places especially where they are, and as far as their power may reach: for so did those of this eminent City, *Thessalonica*, extend their brotherly love in the fruits of it towards all the brethren, in all Macedonia. 5. Even the most praise-worthy graces of most eminent Saints have their own defects, and fall exceedingly short of that perfection which is required, and should be aimed at, 1 Cor. 13. 9. for, though he had commended them much for their brotherly love, yet he implyeth there was some lack in it, while he beseecheth them *to increase more and more.* But 6. and more particularly, This grace of brotherly love can never be at such an height in any, but it is capable of increase, either by intending it more, while it groweth more fervent, and consequently farther out of hazard of being quenched by those provocations which might otherways cool it, 2 Cor. 12. 15. or by extending it more, especially in its fruits of beneficence towards more and more

more objects, *Ecclef. 11. 1. 2.* or by spiritualizing it more, while there is a greater abstractedness in its exercise from self ends and motives, *Rom. 12. 9.* for, *Paul* intimates their brotherly love, so much commended, was capable of increase, while he bids them *increase more and more. 7.* See a further note *v. 1. doct. 8.* grounded upon this intjunction, *increase more and more.*

*Ver. 11. And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, (as we commanded you.)*

He doth here press a fourth branch of sanctification, to wit, that they would study (or as the word signifieth, contend with such eagerness as ambitious men do for honour) to be of a quiet spirit, without creating trouble either to themselves or others, by their importunate intruding upon other mens business, with neglect of their own concerns, and by seeking to live upon the labours of others. And that this is intended by the *quietness* here enjoined, appeareth in part by the means prescribed for attaining to it, which are first, *that every man do his own business*, that is, meddle with those things, and those only, which come within the compass of his duty: So that he condemneth not a charitable minding of the affairs of others, when we are called to it, *Phil. 2. 4.* but only a restless intermeddling with such things as concern us not. 2. That he *work with his own hands*, whereby he enjoyneth industry and painfulness in our callings, and what he speaketh of the *hands*, must

must be taken figuratively, for any member of the body or faculty of the mind which make chief use of in any lawful calling, which last piece of the duty chiefly is enforced first, from his own Apostolick authority who had so enjoined when he was with them. See 2 Thess. 3. 16. *Doct. 1.* There is not any one thing more inconsistent with the grace of brotherly love, and with the exercise of that grace, than a turbulent spirit who must have some meddling hand in every thing, wherein he is concerned, least, and doth sinfully neglect those other things, wherein by virtue of his station he is concerned most; for so much is implied while the Apostle presseth the exercise of a quiet spirit, in opposition to that turbulent meddling humour, immediately after *brotherly love*, as an help unto it: *And that ye study to be quiet*, saith he. 2. As a mans greatest honour doth stand in the exercise of Christian virtues, and more especially in a Christian peaceable and sober deportment, flowing from a meek and quiet spirit, which is a choice piece of that ornament wherewith Christians should be adorned, 1 Pet. 3. 4. So this calm and peaceable frame of a quiet spirit will be found not easily, nor without the utmost of our serious endeavours attainable, if we consider not only how great an enemy Satan is to this, as to all other graces, Ephes. 4. 26, 27, but also how corruptly all men are by nature principled to think this truly Christian honour but their shame, and a living and dying in obscurity and disgrace, *Judge our*, and that those are only honourable, who by winding themselves into



all businesses are admired, or feared, or depended upon by all, 1 Sam. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. for, as it was said in the exposition, the word rendred *study*, signifieth to contend with such eagerness as ambitious men do for honour; which implyeth both that this quiet frame of spirit should be looked upon as our honour, and not attainable if not eagerly sought after: *And that ye study to be quiet*, saith he. 3. This Christian frame of a meek and quiet spirit; with a calm and peaceable deportment flowing from it, is a far other thing than a love to live in sluggish ease, and to eschew even the necessary trouble which God doth sometimes call us to encounter in the way of duty; for such a base desire of sluggish ease is here opposed to it, while he prescribeth, as an help for attaining this quiet frame of spirit, that *we do our own business, and work with our own hands*. 4. As those polypragmatick spirits and busie-bodies, who do importunately ingyre themselves upon the affairs of others, and can suffer nothing, neither of publick or private concernment; to pass them; except they intermeddle with it, either as umpires or parties, or as some one way or other concerned in it, As those I say do create much trouble and strife both to themselves and others: So a choice preservative of peace and quietness in publick societies, and in mens own spirits, is that every man being content with the station wherein he is set (1 Cor. 7. 20, 21.) do busie himself with those things only to which he is called by God, as knowing that the best things done with best intention, if without a calling to them, are displeasing to the Lord, 2 Sam. 6. 7. for, *Paul* doth

doth reach both there, while he enjoyneth, as a  
 help for attaining this quiet and peaceable frame  
 of spirit; that every man meddle with those things,  
 and those only which come within the compass of  
 his duty: *And leave your own business,* saith he.  
 As most busie meddlers with the affairs of others  
 are usually so careless neglectors of their own. So  
 idleness and sloth in those things of a mans  
 own concernment, do usually drive him to strifes,  
 and from thence to employ his wits how he may one  
 way or other prey upon other mens estates for his  
 own subsistence, and thereby disturb both his own  
 peace and the peace of others. For, while he en-  
 joyneth diligence and industry in a mans own call-  
 ing, as an help to attain that quiet and peaceable  
 frame of spirit, he implieth that contrary sloth  
 doth usually drive men to busie meddling, and to  
 disturb both themselves and others. *And to work  
 with your own hands,* saith he. 6. As the Lord  
 alloweth none to live idle, but will have all to em-  
 ploy the wit and strength which he hath given  
 them in some lawfull calling or other, where  
 in they may promote the good either of Church,  
 Family or Common-wealth, Eph. 4. 28. So pain-  
 fulness and industry in our own callings is a singular  
 help to stop our ears from being taken with the  
 alluring sound of many enchanting tentations, and  
 of those in particular which would allure us to  
 meddle with the affairs of others to their pre-  
 judice, and to employ our wit in raising stirr  
 and divisions among Societies for our own ad-  
 vantage; we should find so much of work, what

from one thing what from another, at home, as should make us loath to go abroad, except when we are called and pressed to it: for, as an help to attain a quiet and peaceable frame of spirit, he enjoyneth every one to work with their own hands. 7. It is the duty of Ministers to press upon people not only the practice of Religious duties, but also diligence and painfulness in the duties of every mans particular calling; And so to press the former, as under a pretence of zeal and diligence in those, he do not make way for, or connive at negligence in the latter: for Paul doth so, not only here, but also shewes he had done it formerly: *Work with your own hands, as we commanded you* (saith he. *q. 11*) The word Preached doth not presently vanish when spoken by Ministers, but stands as a constant rule for all time coming, though never so long after, binding the consciences of those who heard it to walk by it, as they would not be judged for their disobedience to it: And therefore the word when Preached should be carefully laid up in the hearts of hearers for that end: for, Paul sheweth that the word which he had preached to them when he was with them, was binding to them yet: *As I commanded you* (saith he. *q. 11*)

Ver.

Ver. 12. *That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing.*

Here are other two arguments for pressing industry and painfulness in their calling; first, hereby they should walk honestly, and in a seemly decency, in the eyes of those who were without, or of unconverted Pagans (so called, 1 Cor. 5. 12. as being without the pale of Christs visible Church) and otherwise both they themselves and Christian Religion should be reproached by those Heathens. 2. Hereby, and by Gods blessing upon their diligence (Prov. 10. 22.) they should attain to such a tolerable competency in things worldly as to have lack of nothing, to wit, which the Lord did see fit and convenient for them to have, Psal. 84. 11. *Dost. 1.* Such is our love to sloath and ease, Prov. 6. 9, 10. and so prone are people to abuse the doctrine of Christian liberty, as a pretence for shaking off the yoke of all necessary and painful duty, Gal. 5. 13. that the most of people, especially those who can by their wits find out a sinful shift, covered over with some handsome pretext, to subsist otherwayes, can hardly be kept from giving themselves over to idleness, or stirred up to look upon diligence in particular callings as a matter of conscience: for, therefore is it that Paul seeth it necessary to use so many arguments, to enforce upon wary medlers in other mens affairs, diligence in their own: *That ye may walk honestly.* 2. As diligence

gence and industry in the duties of a mans particular calling, is a piece of seemly decency and honesty: so there is nothing more unseemly and base than a lazie sluggard, who being neither profitable to himself nor others, doth live as if he were only born to eat, drink and sleep, and do nothing else: and though such idle sluggards be neither whoremongers nor thieves, yet they may and should be justly branded with dishonesty, and esteemed to lead no honest life: for, so much doth *Paul* teach, while he calleth painful industry a walking honestly: *That ye may walk honestly*, saith he. 3. It is the duty of Christians, as in the first place to approve themselves to God, *Math. 8. 4.* and next unto good men, *Psal. 52. 9.* So also in the third place to those who are *without*, even naughty wicked and profane men, in so far at least as that we do not scare them from Christ, and give them occasion to speak evil of Religion, *1 Tim. 5. 14.* for, so doth *Paul* enjoin: *That ye may walk honestly toward them that are without.* 4. there is not any thing that makes both Religion, and those who profess the same, more unseemly and unfavoury to profane men, than when those who pretend much to Religion do under any pretence, whatsoever, live lazie sluggards in their particular callings, exposing themselves and theirs to be a burden to others, and to live upon the sweat of other mens faces; They are so much convinced from natures light of the unseemliness of this sin, that as they burthen Religion with all the blemishes of those who profess it, So they cannot think that such  
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a Religion hath God for its Author, which giveth people liberty to live in the practice of such an evil : for, while *Paul* affirmeth that their painful diligence in a particular calling would be *walking honestly toward them that are without*, he insinuates that they would reproach them and Religion both with dishonesty, if they lived idly. 5. It is no small mercy for a man to have competency of things worldly, so as he neither know the power and strength of those tentations which arise from pinching scarcity and want, *Prov. 31. 9.* nor yet be necessitated to depend for a livelihood upon the coldryff, and oft-times merciless, charity of others, *James 2. 15, 16.* for, *Paul* teacheth them so much, while he perswades them to painful diligence, by a promise of desirable competency : *and that ye may have lack of nothing*, saith he. 6. See a further note from the strength of this Argument to inforce industry and painfulness in our lawful callings, upon *Eph. 4. 28. doct. 6. That ye may have lack of nothing.*

Ver. 13. *But I would not have you to be ignorant brethren, concerning them which are asleep, that ye sorrow not, even as others which have no hope.*

In the second part of the Chapter, The Apostle, while he posseth a fifth branch of sanctification, to wit, moderation of sorrow for their friends who died in Christ, many whereof were doubtless martyrs for the truth in those dayes of persecution,

chap. 2. 14. and while he gives them many sweet grounds of consolation against immoderate grief, he falleth out in a digression concerning the state of believers after death, and Christs second coming. And in this verse he first proposeth his scope in all, which is, first, to remove all ignorance, uncertainty, or want of full perswasion of the truth of those things which he is afterward to deliver, and especially of the state of believers after death. Next, that hereby they might learn to moderate their sorrow and grief for their deceased friends, and not to mourn excessively or desperately as others, to wit, the Pagan Gentiles, did who had no hope of life, or of a resurrection following. And while he calleth the dead (after the usual manner of Scripture, *Act. 7. 60. 1 Cor. 15. 20. Job. 11. 11.*) by the name of those who sleep, he sets down the first head of doctrine concerning the state of believers after death, which also serveth for an argument to moderate the excessive sorrow of living friends for them, even this, that their death is but a sleep, not a sleeping of the soul, which goeth immediately after death to glory, *Luk. 23. 43.* but of their bodies which rest in the grave free from trouble and care, as a man doth in his bed, and it shall be raised up from the grave in the morning of the Resurrection, *Psal. 17. 15.* by the voice of Christ, with as little difficulty as one will awake his sleeping friend, *Job. 5. 25.* and shall arise refreshed, recreated and in full vigour, *1 Cor. 15. 42, 43.* to go about their endless work of praises to God and the Lamb, through the long lasting day of never ending eternity,

Eternity, (see p. 17.) as a man after sleep ariseth refreshed for his work. *Doff. 1.* As the children of God are often pressed down with more than ordinary sorrow and grief arising from cross dispensations: So sometimes there is not so much cause of sorrow in the dispensation it self, as in their own ignorance, which mis-represents the Lords way of dealing, and makes it look with a more terrible aspect than really it doth: for, those *Thessalonians* were excessively grieved for the death of their friends, arising mainly from their ignorance of their happy estate after death, as *Paul* doth here imply: for I would not have you to be ignorant concerning them which are asleep. 2. As there is oft-times even in Gods children some dangerous ignorance of most necessary truths, if not as to the substance yet as to the circumstances of them, or at least a great inadvertence to, and want of serious perpending of these truths in time of greatest need, which is all one with ignorance of them as to any present good to be reaped by them, *Matth. 16. 9.* So it is a considerable part of a Ministers duty, not only to labour upon the affections of people for making them choose and embrace that which is good, though he ought to do that mainly, *2 Tim. 4. 2.* but also to inform their judgement by clearing their dangerous mistakes, that they may be able to discern truth from error, and that, as for other reasons, so, because of the great influence which a darkened judgement hath in misguiding the affections: for, it's like they were not totally ignorant of the resurrection, yet of some comfortable circumstances of it, or at



least did not seriously perpend them; which occasioned their excessive grief, and therefore *Paul* took for himself to inform them: *I would not have you ignorant, that ye sorrow not.* 3. It is not granted to the most near of Christian friends to enjoy the comfortable society of one another alwayes; but however they may eschew all those other sad accidents, which either do locally separate chief friends before their death, *Psal.* 88. 18. or make their society one way or other useless, *Job.* 13. 4, 5. yet death will inevitably make a separation at last; and therefore Christians in wisdom ought to improve to the best advantage their mutual society while they enjoy it: for, *Paul* supponeth that death had removed some eminent Christians at *Thessalonica*, which was cause of immoderate sorrow to such as were left behind, while he saith, concerning them that are asleep, *that ye sorrow not.* 4. Though believers in *Jesus Christ* be freed from the curse of the Law, *Gal.* 3. 13. and consequently from death it self, as it is a piece of that curse, *Gen.* 2. 17. yet death doth seize even upon them, and die they must, the Lord having so appointed, *Heb.* 9. 27. that through the strait and terrible passage of death they may have an entry unto life, *Rev.* 14. 13. So that death hath changed its nature and use as to them, and of a prison to detain them as Malefactors, it is made a passage for them to walk safely through to the possession of their Kingdom as victorious Conquerours; In which respect, among others, *Christ* by his death hath removed the sting of death unto all his followers, *1 Cor.* 15. 55, &c.  
for,

for, *Paul* sheweth that even believers among them did dye: concerning them that are asleep, saith he. 5. There is a moderate sorrow and grief which the Lord alloweth for the death of Christian friends, though not because of any hurt or damage of theirs, who are thereby freed from all sin and misery, and rendred eternally happy, *Rev. 14. 13.* yet for the loss which either we or the Church of God sustain in their removal, *2 King. 2. 12.* and because the death of such is often a forerunner of sad dayes to come, *Isa. 57. 1.* for, *Paul* by forbidding only immoderate grief doth tacitely allow that which is moderate: *That ye sorrow not,* saith he, *even as others who have no hope.* But 6. there is an immoderate and excessive sorrow, either for time or measure, which as even the Godly through infirmity are apt to entertain, so the Lord doth disallow, and from which he willeth Christians to refrain, as favouring much either of want of charity to our deceased friends, contrary to *Isa. 57. 2.* or of Atheistical doubtings concerning the immortality of the soul, and a blessed Resurrection of the body, contrary to *1 Cor. 15.* or at least of too great diffidence of Gods care and providence to supply what loss we our selves or the Church of God do sustain by their removal, contrary to *Matth. 9. last*: for, *Paul* dischargeth this immoderate sorrow, and upon those grounds, while he saith, *sorrow not even as others, who have no hope.* 7. The serious consideration of death, and how its nature and use is changed to believers, might be of it self sufficient to stop the current of immoderate

moderate and excessive grief for their removal; for his expressing their death by a *sleep* doth serve for an argument to allay their immoderate grief, the force whereof is expressed in the exposition: *concerning them that are asleep, that ye sorrow not.* 8. As Heathens, who live and die without the knowledge of Christ, are, as to salvation, in a case wholly hopeles and desperate: So that our bodies, being turned to ashes in the grave, and after that worms have consumed our flesh (*Joh* 19. 26.) shall again be raised the same for substance, and united to our souls, is a truth which natures light, not being inlightened by the written word, could never comprehend, *Act.* 17. 32. for, the Gentiles are said here to have been without hope, to wit, both of salvation, and chiefly of the Resurrection, as he afterwards explains, Now if they could have known a Resurrection, they might have had hope of it: *even as others, saith he, who have no hope.*

*Ver. 14. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so them also which sleep in Jesus will God bring with him.*

Here is a second head of the forementioned doctrine, and a second ground of consolation, to wit, that in Gods due time there shall be a Resurrection unto a glorious life after death; I say, unto a glorious life, for the whole strain of the text doth shew that he speaks only of the Resurrection of the Godly, and not of the wicked unto condemnation, mentioned *Joh.* 5. 29. Because that would have served

served nothing to his present scope, which is not to terrifie, but to comfort them against the death of their beloved friends. See v. 18. and he proves that there shall be such a glorious Resurrection, first, by laying down an undoubted truth, which he supponeth all did *believe* and take for granted, to wit, that *Jesus Christ* the head had *died*, and after death *arose again*. 2. By inferring from this ground, that therefore the power of God shall raise and bring from the grave to life and immortality, *1 Cor. 15. those which sleep in Jesus*, that is, who are dead in Christ, and shall continue in the faith whereby they are ingrafted in Christ, *Eph. 3. 17. to the last gasp*. And he shall *bring them with Christ*, that is, through vertue of their union with him as members with their head : where he shortly hints at the force of the inference from Christs Resurrection to ours, to wit, because we are so nearly united to him ; to which add, that Christs death and resurrection are an infallible fore-runner and necessary cause of our resurrection, seeing by his death he destroyed death, *2 Tim. 1. 10. and arose* that he might quicken us from death, *1 Cor. 15. 20, 21. Doct. 1.* As there shall be a blessed resurrection of believers unto life after death : So the faith of this truth is a singular cordial for comfort against the terrour of death, in so far, as though death get us once at under, yet we shall not be detained by it ; and dearest friends who at death do part with grief, shall then meet with joy : for, the Apostles scope is to comfort them against death from the faith of the resurrection : *for if we believe, &c.* 2. Concerning Christs death and resurrection,

on, see upon *Gal. 1. 1. doct. 7. Jesus dyed and rose again.* 3. Though thus saith the Lord, and divine revelation, be a ground sufficient in it self whereupon to build our faith, *Psal. 60. 6.* yet such is our unwillingness to believe, especially when the thing spoken hath no ground in reason, *Gen. 18. 12.* and so great is Gods condescendence to help and supply our weakness, *Joh. 20. 27.* that he alloweth us to make use of any other lawful mean whereby we may strengthen our faith, and as it were reason our selves up to a belief of that which the Lord saith: for, so the Apostle doth teach us, to take help from Christs death and resurrection to strengthen us in the faith of our own resurrection: *for if we believe, saith he, that Jesus dyed and rose again, even so, &c.* 4. Among other things helpful to bring us to the solid and fixed belief of revealed truths this is one, to single out some truths which are more easily believed than others, as having, besides the authority of God interposing for the truth of them, some further confirmation from humane testimony, or their powerful effects upon our own hearts or the hearts of others, that so being once fixed and settled in the faith of those, we may be thereby in some measure helped to give credit unto all such other truths as have dependence upon them: for *Paul*, to bring them to the faith of their own resurrection, would have them improving the faith they had of Christs death and resurrection, which was confirmed by so many witnesses, *Luke 1. 1, 2.* and accompanied with wonderful effects upon the hearts of many: *If we believe that Jesus dyed and rose again, even so, &c.*

5. As those, and those only, shall attain to the blessed resurrection of the just unto life, who continue in the faith, whereby they are ingrafted in Christ, to their last breath, *Heb. 3. 14.* So the union betwixt Christ and believers, once made by faith is so sure and firm, that death it self cannot dissolve it; yea not only their souls, but also their bodies being separate from their souls, and in a manner from it self when dissolved in the grave to ashes, do yet remain united to Christ: For, those whom God shall raise to a glorious life are designed to be such *as sleep in Jesus*, and living, dying, and dead are still in him, yea and their bodies which only do properly sleep are also in him: *Even so also them which sleep in Jesus* will God bring with him.

6. The great prop for our faith to rest upon, as to the truth of the resurrection, is the power of God, whereby he is able to do what he will, *Psal. 135. 6.* and to make us of new out of our own ashes, as once at the first he made all things of nothing, *Heb.*

*11. 3.* for, he leads them to Gods power for grounding of their confidence, while he saith, *Them — will God bring with him.*

7. Through vertue of that union betwixt believers and Christ, it cometh to pass that whatever hath befallen Christ, as he is the head of believers, shall in Gods due time be verified in believers themselves, that due proportion and distance being always kept which is betwixt head and members: for, he inferreth that we shall be raised because he arose, because of our union with him: *them — will God bring with him.*

Ver. 15. *For, this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep.*

Followeth a third head of the forementioned doctrine, expressing the order wherein the dead shall arise, which serveth also for a third ground of consolation against immoderate sorrow. And first, in this verse, that he may conciliate authority to the following doctrine, which transcends the reach of humane reason to know and understand without special revelation, he doth, after the manner of the Prophets, *Zech. 4. --- 6.* premit a preface, asserting that what he was to say was *by, or in the word of the Lord*, that is, in his name and by virtue of expresse commission from him. 2. He sets down the order wherein the dead were to rise, first negatively, to this purpose, *They which shall be then alive and remain on earth until Christs second coming*, as a small remnant of all that numerous company of believers who had formerly lived, but ere then will be removed by death, that small remnant, I say, shall not prevent or have the start of those who are *asleep* or dead, to wit, neither as to their meeting with Christ in the air, nor their actual possession of glory, spoken of *v. 17.* and *Paul* puts himself among those who shall be then alive, while he speaketh in the first person, *we*, not as if he had been to continue until then, but because he divides all believers at Christs coming in two ranks, the living and the dead, he doth as it were for an  
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example of the purpose in hand, place himself among the living as he then was when he wrote : or that he may thereby reach believers in all times to make ready for that day, as if it were to come in their own time, because the peremptory time when it shall come is uncertain, *Matth. 24. 42. Doct. 1.* So violent is the current of impetuous affections when once given way to, *Psal. 77. 3.* so hardly are we convinced of the evil that is in the excess of any thing in it self lawful, and in particular in the excess of immoderate grief, *Joh. 4. 4, 9.* that a word in the by will not allay it : there must be word upon word, and reason upon reason, to demonstrate not only the sinfulness of it, but also that there is no reason for it : for, *Paul* having given two reasons already to allay their immoderate sorrow, he doth here give a third taken from the order wherein the dead shall rise : for this we say unto you, &c. 2. As Ministers should bring forth nothing for reason, but that to which they may premit, *Thou shalt see the Lord* : So whatever truths they deliver, though never so far above the reach of natures light, if once it be made known that the mouth of the Lord hath spoken them, we ought without further enquiry to stop our ears unto all that carnal or corrupt reason can suggest against the truth of them : for, being to deliver some mysterious truths above the reach of natural understanding, he premitteeth this, that they had divine authority for them, and therefore should have credit : for this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, saith he. 3. The Lord Christ shall never want a Church of believers upon earth, which in despite  
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of Satans malice to the contrary shall still have a being, either more conspicuously, *Isa. 2. 2.* or more hidly, *Rev. 12. 6.* in some one place or other, until Christs second coming: for, *Paul* beweth there will be some believers *alive, and remaining until the coming of the Lord.* 4. The Lord Christ who is now absent in his humane nature and bodily presence in Heaven from us, *Act. 2. 21.* shall again return and at the last day be present with us, and this not only in his power and virtue, as he is present with believers always, *Math. 28. 20.* but as God and man in both his natures: His very humane nature shall be brought down from Heaven with him, and every eye shall see him, *Rev. 1. 7.* for, the word rendred *coming*, doth signifie a presence in his being and essence, and not his power only: *unto the coming of the Lord.* 5. The great advantage which our godly friends who dye to the Lord shall receive themselves by death, should allay our excessive sorrow for their removal, notwithstanding any loss which doth thereby befall unto us; otherwise our grief is but selfish, and carryeth in it but a small regard to their happiness: for, *Paul* in this and the following verse, doth labour to allay their immoderate grief, because their deceased friends received no prejudice, but great advantage by their death: *we which are alive shall not prevent them which are asleepe.*

Ver. 16. For the Lord himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trumpet of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first.

This verse doth, first, hold forth the glorious and terrible manner, wherein Christ himself in his bodily presence (see v. 15. doct. 4.) shall descend from Heaven to Judge the world: He shall come with great Majesty, as Kings do enter their Royal Cities, with such solemnities, as great Judges do set themselves upon the Bench, or with such terrour as Generals of Armies do joyn Battle with the Enemy: for the several things attributed to his coming in this verse have in them allusions to all those. But more particularly he shall come *with a shout*, The most probable meaning is, that he himself shall give the word of Command both to dead and quick to compear at his Bar; which command of his shall be proclaimed by an *Arch-Angel*, that is, some one or other chief Angel, whose proclamation shall be confirmed by sound of *Trumpet*, or with some formidable martial-like voice as of a Trumpeter; called the last Trumpet, 1 Cor. 15. 52. because none shall sound after it; and the *Trumpet of God* here, because it shall ratifie the command come forth from God, and shall sound so loud as it will be heard far and near, even by those who are in the graves, Job. 5. 28. and depths of the Seas,

Rev. 20. 13. for, the excellency of a thing useth to be set forth by this epithete, as the trees of God, *Psal.* 104. 16. Next, the order wherein the dead in Christ, that is, in the faith of Christ, shall rise, is set down positively, *they shall rise first*, that is, before those who are alive shall partake of that glorious change mentioned, *1 Cor.* 15. 51. which shall be to them in place of the Resurrection. *Doct.* 1. The will of God is the supream cause of every thing which falleth out, wherein, being once known, we ought to acquiesce without farther enquiry: for, *Paul* giving a reason, as it appears by the causal particle *for*, why the living shall not prevent them which sleep, he rests on Gods will, voice and command, enjoyning the dead to rise first: for the Lord himself, saith he, *shall descend*, &c. 2. The Lord Christ in his bodily presence is now contained in Heaven, and not upon earth; for if he were already upon earth, as the ubiquitaries, and maintainers of Christs bodily presence in the Sacrament of the Lords Supper do affirm, he could not be said properly to descend to it when he cometh to judgement, but so saith the Apostle here: *The Lord himself shall descend from Heaven.* 3. Christs second coming at the last day to judge the quick and dead, (*2 Tim.* 4. 1.) shall be attended with so great state and Royal Majesty, for the terrour of reprobates, *2 Thes.* 1. 7, 8. and comfort and glory of the Elect, *2 Thes.* 1. 10. that all the terrour, majesty and dreadful reverence, which hath been  
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ever seen upon earth are but poor empty shadows of it, and come far short of the thing it self : He shall come accompanied with a thousand times ten thousand of his glorious Angels, *Jude* 14. by his mighty power shaking Heaven and earth, *Math.* 24. 29. and by the power of his Trumpet raising the dead out of their graves, *Math.* 24. 31. and presenting them all at his seat of Judgement, *Rev.* 20. 12. for, though it be safest to decline all such high-flown, scholastick speculations, and peremptory determinations, about the nature of this shout, voice and trumpet here spoken of, as are usually tossed among the School-men, yet this much may be safely affirmed, that those expressions do shadow forth the dreadful-ness, terrour, and majesty of Christs second coming, by allusions to the most dreadful and majestic spectacles that ever were, are, or shall be seen upon earth : *He shall descend with a shout, with the voice of the Arch-Angel, and with the Trumpet of God.* 4. As there is probable ground from Scripture to affirm, that there are some orders and degrees of dignity among the blessed Angels, some being superiour, and some being inferiour : So all of them, even the chiefest not excepted, are not thought too good, neither by the Lord Christ, nor yet themselves, to be employed one way or other for the honour of Christ, God-man, Mediator, in helping forward the salvation of believers : for, he mentioneth here an Arch-Angel, or chief Angel, distinct from Christ, and sheweth that he, with

many thousands of others, (*Jude* 14. *Matth.* 24. 31.) shall be employed at the last day, about the work of gathering the elect out of their graves, to meet with the Lord Christ: *He shall descend* — *with the voice of the Arch-Angel,* saith he. 5. It is the Lords ordinary way of dealing with his Children, to recompence their disadvantages wherein they seem to be cast behind others, with some one or other advantage or priviledge, wherein they outstrip those, who in other things did seem to have the advantage of them; that so there may be an equality in his way, even where it seemeth most unequal, 2 *Cor.* 8. 14. for it might seem some prerogative unto those who will be found alive at Christs coming, that they shall not taste of death, 1 *Cor.* 15. 51. above the lot of others who must dye and their bodies be turned in ashes ere then. But behold those others shall be recompensed in this their seeming disadvantage, by being first glorified in their bodies before the then living shall be changed, though it be most probable there shall be no considerable difference of time, 1 *Cor.* 15. 52. *The dead in Christ shall rise first,* saith he.

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Ver. 17. *Then we which are alive and remaining shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.*

Here are a fourth and fifth head of the above mentioned doctrine, concerning what shall befall the Godly after death, being now raised: which serve also for two further grounds of consolation. The first of those is that *then*, to wit, after the dead in Christ shall rise, the godly then *alive and remaining* upon earth, being first changed and their bodies in a moment of time made conformable unto Christs glorious body, 1 Cor. 15. 51, 52. Phil. 3. 21. they shall then together with those who have arisen *be caught up*, and that in the twinkling of an eye (as the word implyeth, and other Scriptures express, 1 Cor. 15. 52.) and caught up *in the clouds*, which shall serve as Chariots in which the Saints shall be carryed up *into the air*, as is said of *Elias*, 2 King 2. 11. and of Christ, *Act. 1. 9.* and the end of their being caught up there is to *meet the Lord* upon his way descending from Heaven to judge the world, and to serve unto him, as his glorious train, *Jud. 13.* and for his assessors in the act of passing judgment, 1 Cor. 6. 2. The second of those heads is the great glory which all believers of both sorts shall enjoy with Christ after that, *They shall be with him so*, to wit, in that glorious manner both in soul and body, and this *for ever*, without any change upto all eternity. *Doct. 1.* What ever may be the circumstantial priviledges of some

believers beyond others, at and after Christs second coming; yet none of them shall come short in any thing which is required to the essence and being of compleat and soul-satisfying happiness: for having said, *The dead in Christ shall arise first*, v. 26, he sheweth here, that both quick and dead together shall meet the Lord, and be for ever with him. 2. Though death doth make a sad separation among the Godly, depriving some of the many sweet and rare advantages which they enjoyed by the society of others; yet herein lyeth a choice cordial for comfort against all excessive sorrow arising thence, that ere it be long there shall be a joyful and comfortable meeting, not only one of them with another, but all of them with Christ at his second coming: for, the Apostles scope is to comfort them against immoderate sorrow, from that consideration: *Then we which are alive shall be caught up together with them, to meet the Lord*, saith he. 3. There shall be a glorious change wrought at Christs second coming in the bodies of the elect from what they now are, though not in their substance and proportion of members, *Job 19. 26, 27.* yet in their qualities; and particularly, as in other things, (see *Phil. 3. 20. doct. 11.*) so in this, whereas our bodies are now earthy, lumpish and heavy, tending downwards, they shall then be in a kind spiritual, *1 Cor. 15. 44.* active and nimble, so that they shall be easily and without all hurt caught up on a sudden, or made to mount up as birds, to meet the Lord Christ in the aire, as is here affirmed. 4. However the Godly, while here upon earth, do frequently,

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through error of judgement, *Act. 15. 37, 38.* love to self-interest, *Phil. 2. 2.* with 4. and prevalency of some one corruption on other, *1 Cor. 3. 3.* run contrary courses, rent asunder, and strive to counter-work one another: yet when they meet with Christ at his second coming, all such alienation and distance shall be removed: They shall then be perfectly one, as the father and Christ are one, *Joh. 17. 21, 22.* Their different judgements, exasperated passions, their contrary designs, shall no more be to divide them, or keep them asunder: for then, saith Paul, *We shall all be caught up together to meet the Lord. 5.* Though it will be doubtless no small comfort unto the Godly, at Christs second coming, to have a comfortable meeting of their old acquaintance, with whom they prayed and wept and suffered, and of all the eminent antient believers that ever were, *Matth. 8. 11.* and to have perfect union in judgement, in heart, in affection, in one and the same song of praise with all those, *Revel. 14. 1, 2, 3.* yet the height of their happiness shall not consist in this, but in their blessed meeting with, and enjoying the presence of the Lord Christ, whose glorious face and fellowship will beautifie all that famous general assembly of the first born, and make them lovely, *1 Joh. 3. 2.* and without whom even the fellowship of glorified Saints, or Heaven it self could not be satisfactory: for, he makes their happiness to consist not so much in this that they are caught up together, as that they are caught up to meet the Lord, and so shall ever be with him. 6. As there is an unspeakable fulness of satisfaction



in the enjoyment of Christs presence: so that enjoyment of it which the Saints shall have in Heaven is a far other thing, than any thing of that kind we can attain to here: Our presence with him and nearness to him now, is but only in our spirits, and with his Godhead, 2 Cor. 5. 6, 7. It is but mediate and through the glass of Ordinances, 1 Cor. 13. 12. It's but frequently used, *Psal.* 30. 7. and no ways full, 1 Cor. 13. 12, but then shall it be both in soul and body, *Job* 19. 26, 27. both with his divine and humane nature, 1 Cor. 13. 12. it shall be immediate, 1 Cor. 13. 12. constant, *Matth.* 28. 46. and so full that they who enjoy the meanest degree will find no lack, *Psal.* 17. 15. for, while he saith, *they shall be ever with the Lord* so, he implyeth we will be with him in another manner than we are now. 7. Though even the best while here on earth are so inconstant, fickle and changeable, that the long continuance of any one thing proveth wearisome, yea and hardly can they bear much of the Lords presence for any space of time together, and not abuse it to pride, security or carnal lightness, *Psal.* 30. 6, 7. yet so great a change shall be wrought in glorified Saints, that the long continuance of Christs blessed presence without any interruption shall neither breed satiety and loathing, nor yet be abused by them; but the longer they do enjoy it the more they shall be ravished with it and delighted in it, without all fainting or remitting of their happiness unto all eternity: for he saith, *we shall be ever with the Lord.*

Ver. 18. *Wherefore comfort one another with these words.*

He doth here apply the forementioned doctrine, by expressing one main use which he would have them to improve it for, which is, that not only each of them should thence draw matter of comfort unto themselves, but also administrate *comfort* by *these words*, that is, the preceding doctrine, unto others, especially to such as were under affliction and grief for the death of near and Godly friends. *Doct. 1.* As there is no religious truth so merely doctrinal, but it may be improved for some good practical use : So then do Ministers preach, and people learn aright, those doctrinal truths about the nature of God his attributes, about Christ his person, natures and offices, about the resurrection, Christs second coming and life eternal, when their great and furthest design, is not to inform the judgement only in the knowledge of those truths, but also to rectifie the affections by pressing some practical use, and the performance of some one duty or other upon them : for *Paul* doth handle some of these truths, which are as doctrinal and fall as little under our practice as any other, by pressing upon them thence a practical duty, even to draw comfort from these truths for allaying excessive sorrow : *wherefore comfort one another*, saith he, *with these words.* 2. As we are not to look upon the afflictions of others as of no concernment to us, seeing we are yet in the body, *Heb. 13. 3.* and may suffer what others now feel, but as upon a call from God

God to several duties and to more work than we formerly had: So this is one special piece of work to which we are hereby called, even to prove comfortable unto those whom the Lord hath wounded, that being one end why the Lord doth Minister comfort unto our selves, 2 Cor. 1. 4. for, *Paul shews that the afflictions of others did call them to this duty, and therefore he enjoyns them, comfort one another.* 3. As this duty of ministring comfort unto those whom the Lord hath wounded is incumbent not only unto publick Ministers, but also unto private Christians in a private way: So it ought to be mutual; and therefore as a man would have matter of comfort and not affliction added unto his grief from others, he should labour to be comfortable unto others himself, for, he enjoyneth this duty to be gone about by all, and mutually: *Wherefore comfort one another*, saith he. 4. The best and choicest of comforts, for supporting the spirits of men under afflictions of any sort, are those which are laid up in Scripture, and pertinently drawn from thence with a prudent application of them to the case in hand; there being no afflicted case to which a comfortable, full and (through Gods blessing) an effectual cure is not to be found in Scripture, 2 Tim. 3. 15, 16, 17. and all other comforts not drawn from thence, being either vain and naught, Isa. 55. 2. or a salve much narrower than the sore, Prov. 18. 14. for, he bids *comfort one another with these words*, to wit, those Scriptural comforts which he had presently written.

CHAP. V.



He Apostle, in the first part of this Chapter, doth persist in the former digression, about Christs second coming, shewing the time appointed for it could not be known, v. 1. which he confirm-

eth first, from their own knowledge of its unexpectedness, v. 2. and secondly, from the terrible and unexpected judgement, which shall then come upon secure reprobates, v. 3. against the terrours whereof he doth confirm the Godly, v. 4, 5.

In the second part of the Chapter he presseth the exercise of several vertues : As, 1. Of Watchfulness and sobriety, v. 6. because the contrary vices are works of darkness and ignorance, v. 7. from which they were mercifully delivered, v. 8. — Secondly, of faith, love, and hope, v. — 8. to the last whereof especially, he doth encourage them from the certainty of salvation hoped for, because of Gods decree, v. 9. and the Mediators purchase, v. 10. Thirdly, he exhorteth all to the duties of mutual edification, v. 11. and fourthly, the people to acknowledge and respect their Ministers, v. 12, 13 — and all to live peaceably, v. 13. and sixthly, to administer with patience a suitable remedy to three several sorts of spiritual diseases, v. 14. seventhly, to abstain from private revenge, v. 15. eighthly, to entertain a cheerful frame of spirit under all dispensations, v. 16. ninthly, to be

be much in the duty of prayer, *v.* 17. and tenthly, of thanksgiving, as being well pleasing to God, *v.* 18. eleventhly, not to quench, but to cherish the gifts and motions of Gods spirit, *v.* 19. and twelfthly, in order hereto not to despise, but highly esteem the publick Preaching of Gods Word, *v.* 20. and thirteenthly, to try what doctrines they hear, and after tryal, to hold what is sound, *v.* 21. and lastly, to eschew whatsoever hath any rational appearance of sin, *v.* 22.

In the last part of the Chapter he concludes the Epistle: first, by a prayer, for their growth and perseverance in sanctification, *v.* 23. secondly, by a promise, assuring them that God would answer his prayer, *v.* 24. Thirdly, by recommending unto them, 1. To pray for him, *v.* 25. 2. To salute all their Church-members in his name, *v.* 26. 3. To communicate this Epistle unto them all, *v.* 27. And fourthly, he concludeth with his ordinary farewell-wish, *v.* 28.

Ver. 1. **B**Ut of the times and the seasons, brethren, ye have no need that I write unto you.

The Apostle, foreseeing that some curious heads might haply, from what he had presently written of the Resurrection and Christs coming to Judgment, take occasion to enquire when should those things be? he doth divert them from all such enquiries, by shewing that *as to the times*, that is, the year, month, or day of Christs coming, or *as to the determinate seasons* of those times, whether he

he should come in Summer or Winter, by day or by night, at morning, evening or midnight ( see *Mark* 13. 32, 35. ) *it was not needful for him to write unto them* any thing to that purpose, where more is understood than expressed, to wit, that it was impossible to know either the time or season of his coming ( as the reason used *v.* 2. doth prove ) and therefore it was but vain curiosity for any to enquire concerning it. Hence Learn 1. The written word of God is so contrived, that as nothing necessary to be known for our incitement to duty and direction in the way to salvation is therein omitted, *2 Tim.* 3. 15. So our vain curiosity to know other things, the knowledge whereof is not so necessary, but would rather prove unprofitable and hurtful, is not in the least measure thereby satisfied; for it is written, *chap.* 4. 16. That Christ shall come, and the manner and effects of his coming, the knowledge of all which is necessary, but as to the peremptory time when he should come, the Apostle declineth to write of it, and that because the knowledge of it was not needful: But, saith he, *of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write.* 2. It hath pleased the Lord, in his deep wisdom and mercy, to conceal and keep secret the definite time of Christs second coming to Judgement, that hereby the Lords people may be taught to watch, and to keep their hearts alwayes ready and prepared for it, *Matth.* 24. 42. for, the expression, *ye have no need that I write of the times*, implyeth they could not be known or written of. 3. So presumptuously bold is the wit of man, when not sanctified and better imployed,

as to dare to pry into the most profound of Gods secrets; and more particularly, to search out and determine the peremptory time, longer or shorter, of Christs second coming, the knowledge whereof God only wise hath reserved to himself alone, *Matth. 24. 36.* for, *Paul* supponeth there would be such curious enquiries, both in that and in the following ages, and therefore labourerth to divert the Godly from them, while he saith, *of the times and seasons ye have no need that I write. 4.* The servants of Christ are wisely to divert the Lords people from all such curious enquiries, as being a result of Satans policy, thereby to withdraw them from the knowledge and study of necessary and revealed truths, *1 Tim. 6. 4.* and more especially, they ought to divert from those enquiries which are about the peremptory time of Christs second coming, seeing the knowledge thereof not only is impossible, but also would prove unprofitable and hurtful, as tending to make the world in all ages preceding that wherein he should come more secure and careless: for, so doth *Paul* here suppress all such curious enquiries, while he saith, *But of the times and seasons ye need not that I write unto you.*

*Ver. 2. For your selves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night.*

He gives a reason to prove the impossibility of knowing when Christ shall come (whereof, *v. 1.*) Because they *themselves* know perfectly and exactly,

as having it plainly revealed by Christ himself while here on earth, *Matth.* 24. 42. that *the day of the Lord*, that is, the day of Christs second coming, so called, because he shall then come as Lord, to judge the quick and the dead, *2 Tim.* 4. 1. they knew, I say, that this *day cometh*, in the present time, that is, hasteneth to come, *Rev.* 22. 20. and shall come *as a thief in the night*, that is, suddainly and unexpectedly, whether by night or by day, as the thief who gives not warning before he come to steal. See the same similitude used to shew that Christ shall come unawares and unexpectedly, *Matth.* 24. 43, 44. *Rev.* 3. 3. *2 Per.* 3. 10. whence he leaves unto them to gather that it is not possible to know the time and season of his coming. *Dott.* 1. However in points of truth not clearly revealed, and those which are not of such absolute necessity to salvation, the Lords people may live in suspence without determining themselves peremptorily either to the one hand or the other, *Act.* 1. 7. yet it is their duty, and will be in some measure aimed at by them, to have the exact knowledge of necessary truths, and of such as are most clearly revealed: for this truth, about the unexpectedness of Christs second coming, was necessary and clearly revealed, and therefore they knew it perfectly or exactly. 2. So ready are we to forget, even those truths which we perfectly know, under a violent fit of some temptation, and when we need to remember them most, *Heb.* 12. 5. that the Lords Ministers must not think it wholly unnecessary, but sometimes profitable, to inculcate of new upon the Lords people, and put them in remembrance



membrance of those truths, which they already know : for, though they knew perfectly, *that the day of the Lord cometh as a thief in the night*, yet he doth here tell them of it, and inculcates it, *v. 3. Doct. 3.* It is but a groundless dream, and anti-Scriptural opinion, maintained by some of the ancients, and now by the Papists, that the Antichrist mentioned in Scripture shall be an individual person, who shall have his rise in the world precisely three years and an half before Christs second coming ; for if so, then at that time the very month and day of Christs coming to Judgement should be exactly known, the contrary whereof is here affirmed, to wit, *that the day of the Lord cometh unexpectedly and as a thief in the night.* 4. So great should be our desire to profit in knowledge and sanctified practice, and our skill and dexterity to improve all occurrences for that end should be such, as to bring meat out of the eater, and from the worst of sinful examples to learn somewhat tending, either by way of resemblance or otherwayes, to clear or confirm spiritual truths to the understanding, and to enforce the practice of some spiritual duty upon the will and affections, *Luke 18. 1, &c.* for the Apostle takes occasion to clear this necessary truth, and to inforce the duty of watchfulness following upon it, *v. 6.* from the sinful practice of *a thief*, who cometh unexpectedly in the night to his prey.

Ver. 3. *For when they shall say, peace and safety; then sudden destruction cometh upon them; as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.*

He doth here, first, both clear what was meant by the former similitude, to wit, the unexpectedness of Christs second coming; and also prove that it shall be unexpected, from the terrible effects thereof, to wit, *sudden and unexpected destruction*, and that both of soul and body (as the word is usually taken; see *2 Thes. 1. 9. 1 Tim. 6. 9.*) which destruction shall come, or, as the word signifieth, at unawares surprize the wicked (for of those only he meaneth, as *v. 4.* doth clear) who at that time shall be arrived at such an height of carnal security as to say, that is, not only secretly promise unto themselves in their heart, *Psal. 14. 1.* but also openly declare, if not by their mouth, yet by their deeds (for men do speak also by these, *Tit. 1. 16.*) that they have no fear of approaching judgement, and do look for nothing but continued *peace and safety*, that is, full immunity (as his using two words to one sense doth imply) from any trouble of that sort in their sinful course. Next, he gives some properties of this destruction, first, in a similitude of the pains and *travel of a woman with child*, which, besides the unexpectedness and suddeny of it, as to the hour and moment of time wherein it shall come, whereof already, holds forth the horrible pain and torment of it, the pains of a woman in child-birth being  
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most sharp, exquisite, and for the time almost not supportable. Secondly, in plain and proper terms, he shews it shall be inevitable, *They shall not escape*. In the Original the negation is doubled, which according to the property of that language denyeth most strongly, as if he had said, there shall be no imaginary possibility to get it shifted, so that their destruction shall be 1. sudden, 2. painful, and 3. inevitable. *Dott. 1.* As sin continued in begeth carnal security, and draweth the sinner at length to misbelieve and despise whatever the word of the Lord doth threaten against him for it, *Deut. 29. 19.* So an height of security, and atheistical contempt of divine threatnings, is an infallible mark of a wicked, godless and unrenewed heart: for, so much doth he teach while he speaks not of the wicked expressly, but only describes them from their height of security, which long continuance in sin should at length drive them to, as from an infallible evidence of a wicked man: *for when they shall say peace and safety.* 2. There is not any one more speaking evidence of approaching judgement of one kind or other, than carnal security in sin, and wickedness arrived to such an height, as to make men wholly fearless of Gods judgement and atheistical mockers at all threatnings which forewarn them of it: for, saith he, *when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh.* 3. What ever grounds of confidence, or undoubted perswasion flowing from those grounds, a wicked man may have to escape a threatened judgement; yet all shall serve to little purpose, when God beginneth in earnest to reckon with

with him; his strongest fancy, with all its grounds, will prove but a weak bulwark to bear off the overflowing waves of Divine wrath, when the baile shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place, *Isa. 28: 17.* for, the word rendred *safety* implyes they should have a certain perswasion of safety as if they were above all doubt, and this doubtless upon some grounds satisfactory to themselves, and yet for all that, even *then sudden destruction shall come upon them*, and at unawares surprize them: 4. As a lingring death hath in it much of mercy even to wicked men, who have thereby time and leisure given them to repent, and to plead with God for mercy, *Rev. 2. 21.* — So of all deaths or wayes of calling sinners to an account, those which are sudden and make quick dispatch are to a wicked liver most dangerous, as hardly leaving any place either for Gods patience or mans repentance, but making an end of the person stricken before he can solidly think upon his end: for, he placeth a great part of the terrour of the destruction threatned, in that it should be sudden and unexpected: *Then sudden destruction cometh upon them.* 5. Though none can know the peremptory day, month or year of Christs second coming (see *v. 1. doct. 2.*) yet there are certain signs from which, when they shall fall out, a man may certainly know that the day of the Lord is near approaching, such as these; a general height of carnal security, *Matth. 24: 38, 39.* the conversion of the Jews, *Rom. 11: 15.* and total destruction of the Antichrist, *2 Thes.*

2. 8. for, besides other things, so much may be implied in this similitude, whereby Christs second coming and the destruction of the wicked which doth accompany it are compared to *travail upon a woman with child*, who though she know not the very day and hour when her pains shall take her, yet she hath certain signs whereby to know that her time approacheth. 6. The pain and horreur which the day of the Lord shall bring on Godless reprobates is such, that no tongue can utter, nor can it be expressed in proper terms so as we might conceive it, yea and such, as the greatest of all earthly torments are but weak shadows and slender representations of it, and too little to express it: for, therefore doth the spirit of God, always while speaking of this destruction, make use of borrowed similitudes from the most terrible of earthly and bodily torments, as of those occasioned by fire, *Mark 9* ——— 45. by fire of brimstone, *Rev. 21. 8.* by an eating worm never dying, *Mark 9. 46.* and here the pains and torment of a woman in travail; all which doubtless come far short of expressing to the full that pain and torment which is incomparable, incomprehensible, and cannot be expressed, but by such shadows and representations. 7. Even damned souls and the most profane and lawless of Godless reprobates are not only overruled by and under the dominion of a divine providence, but shall also know so much by sad experience when in the great day, nill they will they, they shall appear before their dreadful Judge and receive their sad and woful sentence from

his blessed mouth, and be presently made without all delay or shifting to undergoe it : for, saith *Paul*, *they shall not escape.*

Ver. 4. *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you as a thief.*

Left the Godly should be terrified, and shaken with the apprehension and fear of that suddain destruction presently mentioned, he doth here cast in a seasonable word of comfort for all such, against the terrour of it, as appeareth from his entrance made to the present purpose, with an adversative particle *But*. And first, he propoundeth the ground of the following comfort, namely, that *they*, to wit, as many of them to whom he writeth as were sincere believers in Jesus Christ ( for so must this indefinite compellation, and that note of universality also, *v. 5.* be understood according to the use of Scripture elsewhere, *1 Cor. 15. 22.* ) none such I say, were in darkness, that is, they were not living in their gross and natural ignorance of God, nor yet in carnal security or Godless profaniry ; for the word *darkness* doth point at both those here, as elsewhere in Scripture, *Rom. 2. 19.* *1 Joh. 1 — 6* — Next, he expresseth the comfort it self flowing from this ground, to this purpose, that however the precise day and time of Christs second coming could not be known by them, no more than by the wicked, *Matth. 24. 36.* yet it should not *overtake* them, or ( as the word implyeth ) violently apprehend them to their hurt and prejudice, as a thief and robber doth apprehend the person and

goods of those whom he spoiles and destroyeth. Now the force of the inference, whereby he draweth the present consolation from the forementioned ground, doth lye in the similitude; take it thus, that as a thief can only do hurt to those who are sleeping securely in the dark night, and not to others: So this terrible day could do no hurt to them, because it should not find them lying secure in the dark night of ignorance or impiety. *Doct. 1.* The truly Godly, and they to whom the terrible threatnings of eternal judgement do least belong, are of such a tender frame and temper of heart (*Isa. 66. 2.*) that usually they are most affected, sadded and discouraged by them, when Godless livers, to whom they properly appertain, are so little moved with them that they rather mock them, *2 Pet. 3. 4.* for, *Paul* did foresee so much, while presently after he had denounced sudden destruction to come upon secure reprobates, he seeth a necessity to guard the Godly against the terrour of it: *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness,* saith he. *2.* It concerneth therefore the wise and faithful servant of Christ so to denounce the terrible threatnings of everlasting wrath against the wicked, as that he presently caution them for the comfort of the Godly; lest otherwise they, for whom they are not intended, be dejected, shaken and discouraged by them: for, so doth *Paul* here guard the former threatening with a *But ye, brethren.* *3.* A prudent Minister should labour so to guard against the terrour and dejection of the Godly by denounced threatnings, as the contrary comfort be not proposed absolutely unto any, but suspended upon such

such conditions as are required in the promise, that so the party who would have comfort may not be deceived, but put himself to a fair tryal by these marks, if he be one of those to whom the intended comfort doth belong; for, *Paul* being to comfort the Godly against that terrible destruction threatened, *v. 3.* he mentions the condition upon which they might escape it, to wit, if *they were not in darkness*, which he affirmeth of them all, or of a great many of them, at least in the judgement of charity, and thereby leaveth it unto themselves to search if they were so in reality: *But ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that day should overtake you.* 4. As the truly Godly and real believers in *Jesus Christ* are freed, at least, from the gross darkness of their natural ignorance and Godless profanity: and as to be lying under either of those doth argue a man to be yet in his unrenewed state: So the best security which a man can promise to himself against the terrour of sudden and unexpected strokes, doth lye in his saving knowledge of *God in Christ*, and in the testimony of a good conscience arising from the shining light of an honest and holy life: for, *Paul* affirms it universally of all real believers, *they are not in darkness*, either of gross ignorance or Godless profanity, and maketh that their ground of comfort to secure them, *that the day of the Lord should not overtake them as a thief.*



Ver. 5. *Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness.*

He insists upon the former ground of comfort, first, by proving the truth of it, that they were not in darkness, because they were children of light, that is (according to an usual Hebraism, *Matth. 11. 19.*) they were not only indued with saving knowledge and holiness (both which in Scripture go under the name of light, *Joh. 3. 19. Matth. 5. 16.*) but also were regenerate and born of God, *1 Joh. 2. 29.* (who is that light, inaccessible, *1 Tim. 6. 16.*) by the Preaching of the Word, *Jam. 1. 18.* which also hath the name of light, *Psal. 119. 105.* And they are called *children of the light and of the day*, to shew that the light of knowledge and holiness, wherewith they were indued, was not a dark glimmering light, as of a candle or twilight, but most clear, as the light of the full and perfect day; and this as it seems, in opposition to that lesser measure of light which was enjoyed under the old Testament; See upon *Gal. 4. 3. doct. 2. and v. 5. doct. 3.* Secondly, by illustration of the proof, while he removeth from them the contrary, not only gross ignorance and profanity under the name of *night*, but also a comparative measure of those, under the name of *darkness.* *Doct. 1.* As souls affrighted with the terrour of God, are often most averse from receiving the comforts allowed to them of God: So the Lords Ministers may not grow weary of taking pains to clear their doubts, and  
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work them up to the embracing of them ; for, *Paul* supposing the Godly might possibly not have closed with the propounded comfort at the first hearing, doth here insist upon it : *ye are all the children of light.* 2. As the doubts of discouraged and afflicted Christians are not so much about the reality of the comfort it self held forth by the word, for a suitable cure to their disconsolate case, as about their own interest in that comfort and right to lay hold upon it : So a Minister in dealing with such would not so much, or only insist in propounding and urging a suitable comfort, as in clearing up unto them and pressing upon them to make sure work of their interest in it, and right to lay hold upon it : for, *Paul* supposing that their doubt would lye about their not being in darkness, which he held forth as the ground and evidence of their interest in the comfort, doth insist mainly in the clearing of that, while he saith, *ye are all the children of light, &c.* 3. The Kingdoms of light and darkness, of saving knowledge and dark ignorance, of grace and profanity, of Christ and Belial, of God and the Devil, are so much inconsistent that they cannot co-incide in one and the same person ; neither can any man be a subject of both Kingdoms at one and the same time : for, the Apostle maketh the denial of the one to follow upon the affirmation of the other : *we are all the children of light, saith he, we are not of the night or of darkness.* 4. The Minister of Christ ought so to deliver suitable truths unto the Lords people for their incitement to duty, for their comfort against discouragements,

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for their reproof or conviction, as that he takes his own allowed share and portion of those truths unto himself, as if he were an ordinary hearer; otherwise he cannot both save himself and them who hear him, according to the promise, *1 Tim. 4. 16.* for, *Paul* doth change the person, in the close of the verse, and takes a share of what he distributes to others unto himself, both here and in the following verses: *we are not of the night and of darkness*, saith he.

*Ver. 6. Therefore let us not sleep as do others; but let us watch, and be sober.*

The Apostle, having now put a close to his digression, about the state of believers after death and Christs second coming, which he entred upon, *chap. 4. v. 15.* doth again return to press upon them some other branches of that sanctification required by God, and spoken of *chap. 4. v. 3* —  
And first, from what he hath presently said of the unexpectedness of Christs second coming, he exhorteth to the exercise of two vertues, tending much to keep them in a readiness for that day, to wit, watchfulness and sobriety. And he presseth them, first, by forbidding them the contrary vices, under the name of *sleeping as others*, to wit, as ungodly men, children of darkness: where by *sleeping* is not meant *sleep* properly taken, and of the body, binding the outward senses, so that for the time they cease to do their office, for this sleep being moderately taken is allowed by God, and given by him as a blessing,  
*Psal.*

*Psal.* 127. 2. and some who, it's like, will be found sleeping thus at the last day shall be saved, *Luke* 17. 34. although excess even of bodily sleep be a sin, *Prov.* 24. 33. and may be here in the second place look'd at, either as a cause, concomitant, or effect of that spiritual sleep here forbidden, which is no other than that deep sleep of carnal security, whereby all the spiritual senses of a man, who is taken with it, are bound up, *Matth.* 13. 15. so that he regards not his duty, *Matth.* 25. 3, 5. is wholly fearless of threatned judgements, *Deut.* 29. 19. and besotteth himself with such contentments and pleasures as he can find in this present life, *Luke* 12. 16, 17, 18. In which sense this word is used, *Mark* 13. 36. *Eph.* 5. 14. And he presseth them next, by enjoining the exercise of the vertues themselves : and first, that they should watch, whereby he doth not so much mean watchfulness of the body, though that be also sometimes very necessary, and therefore required by Christ, *Matth.* 26. 4. as spiritual watchfulness, and of the mind, whereby the man endued with it hath all his inward and spiritual senses free and exercised, *Matth.* 13. 16. so that he doth not only know and discern the voice of God in his word and dispensations calling him to every duty, *Hab.* 2. 1. but also is intent upon it, *Psal.* 119. 32. careful to take up, *2 Cor.* 11. 2, 3. and guard against such tentations as would divert him from it, *Matth.* 16. 23. or ensnare him in the contrary sin, *Mat.* 26. 41. and is alwayes making ready how to meet comfortably with God in any future dispensation of mercy or terrour, *Job* 3. 25, 26. Secondly, that

that they should be *sober*, whereby he enjoyneth not only sobriety and temperance (strictly taken) in the moderate and sober use of meat and drink, *Eccles.* 10. 17. but more largely also, as it moderates, and boundeth our affections in the pursuit and use of all things earthly, *1 Cor.* 7. 29, 30, 31. for not only excess of wine, but the cares of this world, and the prevalency of any other lust, have an inebriating vertue, disturbing the reason and oppressing the senses, see *Luk.* 21. 34. *Doct.* 1. Ministers should so press the faith of priviledges, and use-making of allowed comforts upon the Lords people, and people should so improve their priviledges, and comforts, as that neither of them be abused for a sleeping pillow to foster negligence, but both of them improved as incitements to duty: and comforts should be so minded as duty be not neglected; otherwise the most comfortable promises will prove but dry breasts, seeing the Lords ordinary way is to enliven comforts unto his people, when they are most diligent in the way of their duty, *Dan.* 9. 20, 21. For, *Paul* having asserted their priviledge of being freed from darkness, and inferred thence their comfort that the terror of that day should not overtake them, *v.* 4, 5. he draweth an argument from both, to incite them to their duty, *Therefore*, saith he, *let us not sleep.*

2. The undoubted certainty of divine promises, made to believers for their preservation from judgement and wrath, do no wayes of themselves tend to cherish neglect of duty, but rather to excite them to greater diligence, as that which is a mean appointed of God for furthering the promise

to an accomplishment, *Ezek. 36. 37.* For, *Paul* having given to believers among them a most undoubted promise that the terrour of that day should not apprehend them to their hurt, *v. — 5.* he inferreth thence, *therefore let not us sleep.* 3. A possibility to meet with a sudden stroke and unexpected tryal, hath in it a call and voice unto the Lords people to shake off security and laziness, and be upon their guard lest they be suddenly taken and surprized by it : for, from what he spoke also, *v. 23.* of that sudden unexpected coming of the day of the Lord, he inferreth here, *Therefore let not us sleep.* 4. Then do we make a good use of bad examples, when we so look on them, as not to imitate them, but to scare us from the like, while we hate, abhor and detest them : for he propones the example of other secure sinners as a reason to dissuade them from the like, *Let not us sleep as do others.* 5. The wise Lord doth sometimes exercise his people by propounding to them a possible hazard of meeting with an unexpected tryal with which he doth not intend ever to assay them ; and this in mercy to them, that the apprehension of an uncertain hazard, may put them upon the exercise of some piece of necessary duty, which otherwise would possibly have been neglected : for Christs unexpected coming, mentioned *v. 2, 3.* was not to fall out in their time, and yet it is held out unto them as a thing possible, the good whereof is here expressed, even, that thereby they might be excited to the exercise of sobriety and watchfulness. *Therefore——let us watch and be sober.* 6. As a man who would make conscience to exercise any grace

grace and vertue, must set himself to abandon the contrary vice ; So the work of through and full mortification of any sin is then carryed on to purpose, when we do not rest upon a bare surceasing from it, but set about the practice of the contrary duty ; for, in pressing the exercise of those vertues he forbids the contrary vices, and while he forbid-  
 deth security he exhorts them to exercise the contrary vertues : *let us not sleep, but let us watch and be sober.* 7. The exercise of these two graces, watchfulness and sobriety, do best together, and hardly can be separate the one from the other ; in so far, as an unsober heart overcharged with surfeiting, drunkenness and the cares of this life cannot discharge the duties of watchfulness mentioned in the exposition, and an unwatchful heart that is not intent upon duty, and guarding against tentations contrary to it, cannot choose but be ensnared by the subtle and alluring tentations of worldly pleasures and advantage, *Mal. 2. 15, 16.* and to exceed the bounds of moderation in the pursuit and use of things earthly, *Luk. 21. 34.* and consequently prove unsober : for, therefore doth the spirit of God, not only here but else-  
 where, enjoin the exercise of those two vertues. *Let us watch and be sober.*

Ver. 7. *For they that sleep, sleep in the night; and they that be drunken are drunken in the night.*

8. *But let us who are of the day, be sober,——*

Here is a reason to enforce the former exhortation, to wit, because sleep and drunkenness are the works of darkness, for going about whereof men do usually (if they be not all the more sluggish and enslaved to their lusts, *Jer. 6. 15.*) choose the night season. The truth of which reason doth hold whether we take the words to mean of *sleep*, *drunkenness*, and *night*, properly so called, or if we take them improperly as they were formerly expounded, *v. 4. 5. 6.* for hardly will any other than they who are in the night of their natural darkness and unrenewed state give themselves to the deep sleep of carnal security and to spiritual drunkenness or an over-burthening and besotting themselves with the cares and pleasures of this present life, *1 Thes. 4. 5.* This is *v. 7.* Whence he inferrs that seeing they *were of the day*, that is, delivered from the dark night of their natural ignorance, born of God, and endued with the most clear light of saving knowledge and holiness, as was affirmed *v. 5.* that therefore in very common honesty they behaved to shun those works of darkness, and live in the exercise of Christian sobriety, and consequently of watchfulness also, the one of which graces cannot be separate in exercise from the other; see *v. 6. doct. 7.* This is *v. 8* —  
*Doct. 1.* Things lawful and allowed should be gone about



about in their convenient season which God and nature hath allotted for them ; and the wrong timeing of a thing in it self allowed, may make it be imputed unto us for sin : for, taking the words in their proper sense, he shews that the time in which men do usually take their sleep, as most convenient for it, is the night and not the day : *for, they that sleep, sleep in the night.* 2. As the Lord hath left some common principles of conscience, modesty, and common honesty, imprinted by nature upon the hearts of men, to serve for a restraint unto them from arriving at the utmost height of sin and wickedness at the first, and while through custome of sinning they be either weakened or extinguished ; So when men do openly avow their sin and profaniry, and transgress all bounds of modesty, and common honesty, it speaks them arrived at a greater height of sin and wickedness than was usual to be found among the grossest of Pagans : for they were not so shameless as to avow their drunkenness, but being restrained somewhat by modesty and respect to common honesty were only *drunken in the night.* 3. As an unrenewed man is a very prey to the most shameless of temptations, which Satan is pleased to assault him with, or to enslave him by ; So the sin of gross ignorance of God, and the way to Heaven, is that which exposeth the unrenewed man most to be preyed upon without resistance by any other sin : for, taking the words improperly, he makes the man unrenewed who is in the night, to be enslaved to carnal security, intemperance, and a kind of spiritual besottedness with things of a present life,  
and

and doth not obscurely hint at his dark ignorance, for which mainly his unrenewed state is compared to the night, as the great cause of all his slavery: *they that sleep, sleep in the night; they that are drunken, are drunken in the night.* 4. A gracious state must, and will be attended with gracious actions and an holy conversation suitable unto that state; and therefore a man ought not so much to look to what others do, as to what the state of grace, unto which he pretends, doth call upon himself to do: for, he enforces the exercise of sobriety upon them, from this, that they were *of the day*, in a gracious state of saving knowledge, without regarding what others who were not in that state did. *But let us*, saith he, *who are of the day be sober.* 5. Though there be such a necessary connexion betwixt a gracious state, and an holy conversation, yet such is our natural averseness from holiness, *Rom. 8. 7.* so strong an interest hath sin in the best, *Rom. 7. 23.* and so many are the temptations and difficulties we have to wrestle through in the way of our duty, *Eph. 6. 11, 12.* that even the renewed man hath need of reiterated and serious exhortations enforced by most cogent reasons to press him to it: for, though he shews that their present gracious state did engage them to the exercise of sobriety, yet he exhorts them to it, and backs his exhortation by a strong reason: *But let us* saith he, *who are of the day be sober.*

Ver. 8. ——— putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and for an helmet, the hope of salvation.

He doth here press another branch of sanctification, to wit, that they would arm themselves for a spiritual battel, which hath also an argument implied in it to force the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety, because it was now a time of fighting, and therefore not of sleeping or immoderate drinking, and the pieces of armour which he bids *put on* are two, first, the *breast-plate*; what this piece did serve for in the bodily armour, see upon *Eph. 6. 14.* and answerable to it in the Christian armour he maketh the graces of *faith* and *love*; what those are, see upon *chap. 1. v. 3.* only the ground of the present similitude is this, That as the breast-plate did secure the breast and vital parts of the body therein contained: so these two graces do secure the vital parts of the soul, and that wherein the life of a Christian doth most consist, to wit, our justification and interest in God, *Rom. 5. 1.* together with our knowledge of it, *1 Joh. 5. 4.* and a plyableness of spirit to all the duties of an holy life flowing from our interest, *2 Cor. 5. 14.* Secondly the *helmet*, answerable to which in the Christian armour he maketh the *hope of salvation*. See what this *helmet*, the grace of *hope* is, and the grounds of resemblance betwixt the two upon *Eph. 6. 17.* Now although he do only reckon two pieces of the spiritual armour here, and not so many as he doth,  
*Eph.*

*Eph. 6. 14.* yet he omits nothing requisite to defend the Christian souldier in this spiritual conflict; for where faith, love and hope are, there is no grace wanting. Neither doth he any thing superfluous, *Eph. 6. 14.* in shewing the necessity distinctly, and the right way of improving of several other graces of Gods Spirit, in this spiritual warfare, seeing he doth there speak of it at greater length, and holds forth the terrour of our spiritual adversaries, and the several distinct tentations, either more expressly or implicitly, whereby they assault us in this battel. Besides what is already observed from *Eph. 6. 14.* &c. upon the several pieces of the spiritual armour and those of them in particular which are here mentioned, and the nature of that spiritual conflict and battel which they do suppose, Learn further, 1. The great cause why men pretending for Heaven and happiness, do so much besot themselves with things earthly, and are so little intent upon their duty, and watchful against tentations, is, their great mistake and ignorance, as if the way to Heaven were easie, beset with no difficulties, and men might go to Heaven with ease and sleeping; and therefore a chief incitement to sobriety and watchfulness, and to shake off security and laziness is to set before us often all those insuperable difficulties and terrible opposition which we are of necessity to meet with in our way to Heaven and happiness; for, to make them watch and be sober, he minds them of the spiritual battel which they behoved to fight: Putting on the breast-plate of faith, &c. 2. As

in bodily wars, drunkards, and sleepy sluggards can never be good souldiers : so secure souls that cannot watch, and tipsy spirits oppressed and entangled with an excessive weight of worldly cares or love to any other lust, will prove but cowards, and never strike a fair stroke, so long as they are such, in this spiritual conflict : for, so much is implied while he joyneth the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety with the right use-making of the Christian armour in this spiritual combate, *let us ——— be sober, putting on the breast-plate of faith*, saith he. 3. As the malice of Satan, our great adversary in this spiritual conflict ( *Ephes. 6. 12.* ) doth bend it self most to strike at, and destroy those things wherein the life and being of a Christian, as a Christian, doth most consist, such as his interest in Christ, right to Heaven, his knowledge of those, plyable inclination to duty, his spiritual sense and motion : So the care of a Christian should run most to provide a sufficient guard for those, even the constant exercise of those three graces mentioned in the text : for he alludes to souldiers, whose great care is to guard their breast, where the heart the first fountain of life is, with a breast-plate, and their head, the original of sense and motion, with an helmet, *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love, and for an helmet the hope of salvation*. 4. The grace of faith is a most necessary piece of the spiritual armour, and almost of universal use to defend the Christian souldier in this spiritual conflict ; for, therefore doth

*Paul*

Paul make it answer to two parts of the bodily armour, the shield, *Eph. 6. 16.* and the breast-plate here, *putting on the breast-plate of faith.* 5. The exercise of love to God and our neighbour must needs be joynd with faith, otherwise faith doth prove but an useles breast-plate, and of no force to secure the vital parts of a Christian in this spiritual conflict: for Paul conjoynes them to make up the breast-plate, *putting on the breast-plate of faith and love,* faith he. 6. The believing souldier will not alwayes meet with present performance of the good things promised upon his closing with the promise by faith, but often the Lord for wise reasons doth exercise him with long delayes, *Heb. 11. 13.* and sometimes with contrary appearances to sense, *Gen. 15. 4, 5.* with *18. 1.* which Satan doth improve as subtle Engines to batter down and pierce his breast-plate of faith as a thing irrational, groundles, contrary to sense, and which will never attain the promised blessings, *Gen. 18. 11, 12.* for if it were not thus, there should be no need of the helmet of hope as an additional part of this spiritual armour to strengthen the breast-plate of faith under delayed performance. *And for an helmet the hope of salvation,* faith he.

Ver. 9. *For God hath not appointed us to wrath : but to obtain salvation by our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He doth here both more generally inforce the preceeding exhortation to the exercise of watchfulness and sobriety, and to arme themselves with the forementioned graces for a spiritual combat, from Gods decree of bringing the elect to eternal life, not without, but in the practice of holy duties, *2 Thes. 2. 13.* and also he seemeth more particularly to give them some encouragements to exercise their hope of salvation mentioned, v. ——— 8. from the certainty of salvation hoped for ; whereof he giveth two grounds, first, Gods eternal decree whereby he had *appointed* or ordained and predestinated them (as the word is rendred, *Act. 13. 47. 1 Pet. 2. 8.*) not to eternal wrath and destruction, but *to obtain salvation*. The word rendred, *obtain*, signifieth to purchase, or, to do much about a thing to obtain it, which purchasing is here ascribed not to themselves, *Tit. 3. 5.* but to Jesus Christ, *Act. 20. 28.* and this is here given as the second prop of a Christians hope, upon which the certainty of the elects salvation depends, even that salvation, which was ordained for them in the decree, is purchased and obtained by Christ. *Doct. 1.* The certainty of salvation, either in it self or to us, is so far from being in its own nature a pillow to foster security or carnal ease, that it's a strong incite-  
ment

ment to duty, and to charge through all difficulties with courage, which we may be assaulted with in our Christian course, yea nothing weakeneth the hands of a Christian Souldier more than diffidence and distrust of success : for he holds forth the certainty of their salvation as an incitement to the forementioned duties ( and more especially to kyth themselves valorous souldiers in this spiritual conflict :) *for God hath not appointed us to wrath*, saith he. 2. As the elect may attain to know assuredly that they are elected (see upon *Eph. 1. 4. doct. 2.* ) So neither the decree of election nor their most certain perswasion of the same do of their own nature render them secure or remiss in duty, but rather doth strongly incline and incite them to the exercise of sobriety and watchfulness and of all other graces, seeing this is the way resolved upon by God for bringing the eternal decree of election to an accomplishment, *2 Thes. 2. 13.* for he mentions the decree of his and their election, as both certain in it self, and also known to him and some among them, as a strong incitement to the exercise of all the forementioned vertues: *for God hath not appointed us to wrath.* 3. So great and insuperable are those difficulties which stand in the way of the salvation even of believers, *Act. 14. 22.* so strong, so numerous and so terrible are their spiritual adversaries, *Eph. 6. 12.* so little is there of strength in themselves to oppose the meanest of them, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* and so improbable is it by reason of all those, that ever such as they shall be saved, That they must look above themselves and draw the



ground of their hope for salvation from God and from Christ, otherwise there can be no sure foundation for their hope to rest on ; for, the Apostle here, while he intends to give grounds for their hope of salvation, mentioned *v.* ——— 8. doth mention only Gods decree and the mediators purchase : *for God hath appointed us ——— to obtain salvation by Jesus Christ.* 4. As God hath not slightly proposed, but peremptorily decreed, fore-ordained and appointed from all eternity ( *Eph. 1. 4.* ) the salvation of the elect, and condescended in that his eternal decree upon the very particular persons whom he intended to save, *Phil. 4* ——— 3. So there are others whom he intended not to save, but to condemn and adjudge to undergo his everlasting wrath ; See this latter decree further cleared upon *Eph. 1. 4. doct. 4.* for he saith, *God hath appointed them to salvation, and not to wrath*, implying, that he had appointed others to wrath, though not them. 5. Though the decree of election to salvation be peremptory and absolute, so as to exclude all possibility of its not obtaining the end proposed, *Matth. 24. 24.* yet not so as to exclude all means on Christs part for obtaining, or on our part for attaining ( *Heb. 12. 14.* ) that salvation to which the elect are ordained, seeing he hath in that same decree appointed to bring about their salvation by such and such means, *2 Thes. 2. 13. for God hath appointed us to obtain salvation*, saith he, not without means, but by *Jesus Christ.* 6. Though the merits of Christ were not a cause moving God to love or elect any to salvation, for his electing love did  
move

move him to give Christ for sinners, *Joh. 3. 16.* yet they are the procuring meritorious cause for the worth whereof salvation is actually bestowed upon any, They are the cause, though not of the decree, yet, of bestowing the salvation decreed: for, the Apostle affirms the obtaining or purchasing of salvation was by our Lord Jesus Christ. 7. As salvation could not be actually bestowed upon the elect before it was purchased, and an equivalent price payed to divine justice in satisfaction for those sins by which they had lost and fore-faulted it, *Heb. 9. 15.* So neither they themselves, nor any meer creature, was able to make this purchase or lay down the price: The redemption of the soul is precious and ceaseth for ever, to wit, among meer creatures, *Psal. 49. 8.* It was Christ alone, the second person in the blessed Trinity, who made this purchase of lost salvation, and was designed in the same decree of election for that end. Hence *Eph. 1. 4.* God is said to have chosen us in Christ, which is more plainly expressed here, *He hath appointed us to obtain*, or to the obtaining or purchasing of salvation, by Jesus Christ, implying, that the salvation for which the elect were appointed, behoved to be purchased, and the purchase of it by the same appointment was put over upon him, there being no other able for it.

Ver. 10. *Who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him.*

He illustrates the last ground of hope by shewing, first, the means by which Christ did purchase salvation to the elect, and what this purchase stood him, to wit, no less than his blessed life: *he died*, and that *for us*, that is, in our stead, *Gal. 3. 13.* and next, the end proposed by him in his death, and which is undoubtedly obtained thereby, to wit, *that we*, or all the elect, of whom *v. 9. should live* the spiritual life of grace here, and eternal life of glory hereafter, and this whether they *wake or sleep*: which words may not be taken as *v. 6.* for they who sleep securely in sin, do not live with Christ, but either properly for bodily sleeping, or watching, or rather improperly, for our living, and dying this natural life or death, as *1 Thes. 4. 13.* So the sense is, That no change which can befall the believer in this life, no nor death it self, shall hinder him to live this life, and to *live together with him*, that is, by vertue of his union with Christ and of that influence for life which floweth from his blessed face and presence.

*Doct. 1.* The salvation of the elect, through reason of their sin, was so deeply mortgaged, and they so far from any ground of claim unto it, that no less ransom was necessary to purchase salvation for them, than the death and sufferings of Jesus Christ; for, *Paul* condescending on the way how Christ did purchase salvation for the elect, saith, *he died for us, that we should live.* 2. The great

great end and cause of Christs death was, that, having thereby payed a sufficient ransom to provoked justice for the guilty elect, he might purchase for them that life and salvation which was formerly fore-faulted and lost; and therefore, though by his sufferings and death he did confirm the truth of the Gospel, and leave us an example of patience to follow his steps, *1 Pet. 2. 21.* yet those were not the principal, much less the only, but the secondary ends of his death: for, *Paul* sheweth that he died for this end mainly to obtain and purchase salvation, *and that they should live together with him.* 3. Then do we rightly apply the fruit of Christs death as to the purchase of salvation unto our selves, when we joyntly therewith draw an argument from it to resist sin which stood our Lord so-dear, and to lead an holy life, in exercising sobriety, watchfulness and all other saving graces, as that which he so aimed at in his death: for, this of Christs dying for them may be looked upon as a further incitement to the exercise of all the forementioned vertues, *who died for us,* saith he. 4. The salvation purchased by Christ for the elect is nothing other but a reviving of them from their spiritual death, *Eph. 2. 1.* to that new and spiritual life which is begun here in regeneration, *Joh. 3. 3.* carryed on in the exercise of grace, *Gal. 2. 21.* and shall be afterwards compleated in glory, *Col. 3. 4.* so that saving grace is begun salvation, and grace is no less purchased by Christ than glory it self: for, in stead of saying he died that he might purchase salvation; according to his present scope, as appears from *v. 9.* he saith, as the equivalent

equivalent of it, *he died that we should live together with him.* 5. This life of grace, begun here and perfected in glory, is the most excellent of any other life, It carryeth the name of life from any other besides, which being compared with it, are nothing but a death : for, therefore doth he give it the name of life here absolutely, and without any addition, to shew what kind of life he meaneth, as if there were no other life but it only : *who dyed, saith he, that we should live with him.* 6. Though this life of grace doth not exempt the elect from natural death ; yet so excellent is it that it maketh the man who hath it out-live death. Death it self, the King of terrours, shall not bereave him of it : for, he suppones that the elect will dye their natural death, here expressed by the name of *sleep*, and yet that they shall not be bereaved of this excellent life, *that whether we wake or sleep, we should live,* saith he. 7. It is the presence of Christ, and our union with him by faith here, *Eph. 3. 17.* and sense hereafter, *1 Job. 3.* — 2. (an union that death it self cannot dissolve) which makes us live this blessed and excellent life. It is as the soul to the body, the very life of our life, and that whereby we formally live. So that though Christ by his death did purchase this life, yet the elect do not actually enjoy it until they be united to him : for, so much doth he teach, while he saith, *that we should live together with him.*

Ver. 11. *Wherefore comfort your ſelves together and edifie one another even as alſo ye do.*

He doth here preſs a third branch of ſanctification, the neceſſity whereof in its ſubſerviency to the former duties is pointed at in the illative particle *wherefore*; and the ſumm of it is, that they would, firſt, not only *comfort themſelves together*, as Gods dealing with any did call for comfort, but alſo mutually exhort and incite one another to the exerciſe, as of all other virtues, ſo eſpecially, of thoſe preſently mentioned: for the word rendred *comfort*, ſignifieth alſo to *exhort*. And next, *edifie one another*, or (as ſkilful and diligent Maſons, from whom the word is borrowed) endeavour to advance the work of grace in others, not only by exhortation and conſolation but by all other lawful means of admonition, inſtruction, rebuke, reproof, or good example: And that he may excite them to further progreſs in the practice of thoſe duties and not ſeem by his preſent exhortation to tax them of former negligence, he doth commend their preſent diligence in them. *Doct. 1.* As all Chriſtians of all ranks do ſtand in need of exhortation, conſolation, and to be edified and furthered in the way of grace by all lawful means; So both Paſtors and people ought to make conſcience of diſcharging all thoſe duties; to wit, Paſtors, not only privately, but alſo publickly in the Congregation, 1 *Tim.* 5. 20. and by virtue of their particular calling, office and authority ſo to do; *Tit.* 2. 15. private Chriſtians, again, in private in  
their

their families, *Eph.* 6. 4. among their friends and neighbours, *Act.* 18. 26. and by vertue of a tye of Christian charity towards all the members of the same body, *1 Cor.* 12. 25. For, he sheweth that every one stands in need to be exhorted, comforted, &c. and that it is the duty of all to do so, while he saith, *comfort, or exhort and edifie one another.* 2. As the conscience-making of the forementioned duties among Christians is a singular mean to keep people in a lively watchful frame and temper of spirit; So negligence in them doth of necessity bring along with it great deadness, security and decay of life and vigour in the exercise of any saving grace, and performance of commanded duties: for, the illative particle *therefore*, sheweth that this duty is enjoined as a subservient help to the exercise of sobriety, watchfulness, faith, love and hope, formerly pressed; *wherefore comfort your selves together*, saith he. 3. So many are the discouragements which people must encounter in the way of duty, what from their small progress in it, the averfeness of their own spirit from it, *Rom.* 7. 18. the great opposition from outward and inward tentations to it, *1 Joh.* 2. 16. that they often need as much of consolation and encouragement, as exhortation and admonition, for making them advance in it; for, he bids them, in order to this, *comfort themselves together.* 4. There is none so far advanced, or so diligent in the exercise of any grace, but they need the spur of exhortation, at least to make them persevere; seeing the best are ready to faint, *Jonah* 2. 7. *Gal.* 6. 9. if not also to make them do better, seeing

ſeeing the beſt come far ſhort of what they ought, *Phil. 3* — 13. For, he exhorts them to the preſent duty, though he doth commend their preſent diligence in it : *edifie one another*, ſaith he, *as alſo ye do*. 5. A prudent Miniſter ſhould ſo excite the Lords people unto their duties, as not to neglect their good beginning or progreſs already made, but let them know he taketh notice of them as ſuch, which may prove a forcible encouragement to ſome to quicken their pace, and a ſovereign remedy againſt diſcouragement in others, than which nothing doth prove a greater enemy to diligence in duty : for ſo doth *Paul* here, *edifie one another as alſo ye do*, ſaith he.

Ver. 12. *And we beſeech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you, and are over you in the Lord, and admoniſh you.*

Left by binding the duty of mutual edification upon all Chriſtians, *v. 11*. he had ſeemed to make a publick Miniſtry uſeleſs, therefore he doth lovingly and affectionately ( as the compellation *brethren* and the word rendred *beſeech* imply ) preſs a fourth branch of ſanctification containing a ſhort ſumm of peoples duty towards their Miniſters and Church guides who are here deſcribed to be, firſt,  *thoſe who laboured among them even to wearineſs* ( as the word ſignifieth ) which ſeemeth to relate chiefly unto Miniſters or Preaching Presbyters, the ſpecialty of whoſe office is to labour in the word and doctrine, *1 Tim. 5* — 17. next, they were *over them*, the word ſignifies to excel and bear rule,

*1 Tim.*



1 *Tim.* 3. 4, 12. and thus it expresseth that part of their office, whether they be preaching or ruling Presbyters, which consists in ruling and governing the flock, 1 *Tim.* 5. 17 — only he addeth *in the Lord*, to distinguish Church Government from the Civil. It is spiritual, in things relating immediately to God, and to be exercised not in their own name, but in the name and authority of the Lord Christ, *Matth.* 18. 20. They are over the flock, not as Lords, 1 *Pet.* 5. 3. but as stewards, 1 *Cor.* 4. 1. 3. They did *admonish them*, whereby he expresseth one main thing wherein they were to labour, and to exercise their authority and rule, to wit, their endeavouring by all competent means, and particularly, both by doctrine and more gentle censures, to put a right impression of duty upon the minds of the Lords people. The word in the Original signifieth to put a right mind in one. Next, he presseth the duties of people towards their Ministers, which are first *to acknowledge them*, as the word may be rendred here, for, the naked knowledge of their persons and gifts may be in such as otherwayes condemn them, but the knowledge of them, here required, is an acknowledging them for such as they are by reason of their calling, and ought to be accounted. See 1 *Cor.* 16 — 18. *Doct.* 1. So great an enemy is Satan to the Ordinance of a publick Ministry, 1 *Thes.* 2. 18. so necessary is it that people do countenance that ordinance, and encourage those who are entrusted with it even for their own good, *Heb.* 13. 17. so ignorant, unmindful and neglective are they of those duties which they ought

ought to perform for that end, 2 Cor. 12: 11. that the servants of Christ should, with much seriousness and affectionate insinuation, press upon the Lords people all such duties of respect, reverence, love, obedience, submission, Heb. 13. 17. and gratitude, Gal. 6. 6. as they owe unto their Ministers and those who are over them in the Lord; So far should they be from a total neglect of pressing any such duties under a pretence of self-denial, or from preposterous modesty: for, Paul doth here most seriously and affectionately press duties of that kind, *And we beseech you, brethren, to know, &c.* 2. The duties of private edification should be so gone about and entertained by private Christians, as the office of a publick Ministry be not hereby rendred useles and despicable, or the proper duties thereof incroached upon, by those who are not called to that function, Heb. 5. 4. for, therefore he subjoynes this ptecept, which presseth upon people respect to the publick Ministry, to that other about mutual edification, immediately preceding, *And we beseech you, brethren, to know, &c.* 3. The duties which people discharge to their Ministers should flow from their knowledge and inward conviction, that the place and station wherein their Ministers are set doth call for such duties at their hands, and not from meer custome, force of civil laws, regard to their own credit, or for gaining of their Ministers favour, or any thing of that kind; otherwise, neither will their duty be pleasantly done, nor acceptable to God when it is done: for, therefore doth he enjoyn it as the first piece of peoples duty to

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their Ministers, and the foundation of all the rest, to know and acknowledge them for such to whom they ought in conscience discharge those duties, *And we beseech you, brethren, to know them which labour among you.* 4. One great and main cause of peoples backwardness to do duty unto their Ministers, and of disrespect both to their persons and function, is, their ignorance and not serious perpending the weight and wearisome royle of their labour; the dignity of their office, together with the usefulness and necessity of their work among them; for, therefore doth Paul describe the Ministry from the dignity of their office, the toilsomness of their labour, and the usefulness of their work to the people, as so many motives unto people to discharge that duty which they owe them. *Which labour among you, and are over you and admonish you, and v. 13. for their works sake.* 5. The wisdom of God hath so contrived Scripture, that frequently in one word and sentence it doth comprize a variety of distinct purposes; for here, with one breath he teacheth both people their duty, and Ministers their duty, and maketh the latter an argument to inforce the former. *Know them, saith he, which labour among you, and are over you, &c.* 6. The Lord Christ hath appointed the Ordinance of Church-government in his house distinct from, and in things proper to it, independent upon the Civil Magistrate, to be managed by Church-guides, Ministers and Elders in their Ecclesiastick Courts and Judicatories, *1 Cor. 5. 4.* for, the word rendred *over you*, doth properly and

and usually signifie a power of Jurisdiction and Government, and the expression *in the Lord* doth distinguish this Government from the Civil; *and are over you in the Lord*, saith he. 7. The power of Church-government and the exercise of it is not, by any appointment of Christs, astricted to any one Minister or person whomsoever, having power of authority and Jurisdiction above the rest, neither doth it belong to the body and community of Church-members, but to all the Ministers and Church-guides in common; for, he speaketh here of them all, and only of them, *they are over you in the Lord*. 8. The Lords Ministers ought so to go about one part of their Ministerial function as not to neglect another. They must so Preach, as not to neglect the exercise of discipline; and so exercise discipline as not to neglect to labour in the word and doctrine; for, saith he, *they labour among you, and are over you in the Lord*. 9. So necessary and useful is the exercise of discipline by Church-guides to the Church of Christ, for keeping the ordinances pure, *Rev. 2. 2.* and the Lords people free from the infection of contagious sins, *1 Cor. 5. 6.* for reclaiming and gaining of scandalous offenders to repentance, *1 Tim. 1. 20.* and for ordering all the affairs of Christs house, *1 Cor. 14. 48.* (none of which ends can be attained so well and effectually as by the mean appointed there-to by Christ himself) that the Lords people should be so far from reluctancy to lay their necks under this piece of Christs easie yolk, that they ought to acknowledge, respect, love and discharge all other duties unto their Ministers and Church-

238 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

Guides upon this very account of their exercising discipline, as well as of their labouring in the word and doctrine; for, to incite people to their duty to Ministers, he describes them not only from this that *they laboured among them*, but also *were over them in the Lord*. 10. Whatever other thing is requisite in a Minister, yet this one thing is necessary and may not be wanting, some measure of skill and dexterity to admonish the Lords people of their duty, by clearing up to their minds the equity of it, and producing some pertinent motives for bringing them to a good liking with it: for, his expressing only this one particular piece of their work doth imply that it is a chief one, and that some competency of abilities for it must not be wanting: *and admonish you*, saith he.

Ver. 13. *And to esteem them very highly in love for their works sake, and be at peace among your selves.*

The Apostle in this verse doth, first, press a second head of duty flowing from the former which people owe to their Ministers, to wit, that they should *esteem them very highly* or superabundantly (as the word doth signifie) whereby he points at that inward reverence and respect to their persons and office due to them, to be testified in their speech, *Matth. 12. 34.* and other behaviour, *P. il. 2. 29.* which he shews should be accompanied with love to them, a love, without doubt, which ought to kyth in its effects, *Gal. 4. 15.* Secondly, he gives a reason or motive unto all the fore-mentioned duties,

to wit, *for the work* of their Paſtoral function, that Miniſters might be encouraged in it, *Heb.* 13. 17. and becauſe it is an excellent work in it ſelf, *1 Tim.* 3. 1. and moſt neceſſary and advantageous to the Lords people, *1 Tim.* 4. 16. Thirdly, he preſſeth another branch of ſanctification relating unto all, to wit, the ſtudy of keeping Chriſtian peace and concord *among themſelves*, and eſpecially with their Miniſters; leſt by any means Satan might ſtir up ſtrife and prejudice among them, to make the labours of their Miniſters unprofitable. *Doct.* 1. The great thing which Miniſters ſhould preſs in relation to themſelves upon people, and which people ſhould endeavour toward their Miniſters, is to have their hearts poſſeſſed with an affectionate and good eſteem of their perſons and office, as that which will bring with it the hearty and willing performance of all other duties which they owe unto them; for, he thinks it ſufficient to preſs this eſteem flowing from love, as knowing, that this being attained, all the reſt would follow. *And to eſteem them very highly in love.* 2. This high eſteem which is due from people unto their Miniſter, as it muſt flow from love to his perſon for his works ſake; So it muſt manifeſt it ſelf in kindneſs and beneficence, in a ſeemly behaviour toward him in hoping the beſt of him, in bearing with his humane frailties, in not publiſhing of them, in not receiving miſreports or taking up groundleſs jealousies againſt him, and in ſuch other fruits of love and charity as are mentioned, *1 Cor.* 13. 4, 5, 6, 7. For, he ſaith, *eſteem them very highly in love.* 3. As it is not ſufficient we



do what is right and commanded, except it flow from right and allowed motives; So whatever a Minister be otherwise, for birth, for personage, for riches, for other natural endowments, it ought to be a sufficient motive and inducement to gain him esteem and respect, that the Lord hath employed him in such a worthy excellent work, as the proclaiming of peace to rebels in Christs stead, 2 Cor. 5. 20. the espousing of a bride to him, 2 Cor. 11. 2. and the gaining of souls to God, 1 Cor. 9. 22. and whatever esteem is given him from any other motive, whether the dignity of his place, eminency of his parts, the affableness of his disposition, or his easiness to receive satisfaction in the matter of his maintenance, if it be not also and mainly upon the account of his work, that esteem is not given which is due to a Minister of the Gospel: for, he will have them to *esteem them for their works sake.* 4. As Christian peace and concord among societies is a nursing mother unto all other duties, 1 Tim. 2. 2. so it tendeth, in a special manner, to make the work of the Ministry successful among a people, while Ministers have thereby not only access, but delight to be doing good among the people, and people also to edifie one another; and nothing marreth the good of a Ministry more, than a Spirit of discord, dissention and strife let loose, either betwixt Pastor and people, or betwixt people and people among themselves: for, therefore, it seemeth, immediately after he hath spoken of the duties both of Pastor and people, he subjoyneth, *And be at peace among your selves,*

Ver. 14. *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly, comfort the feeble-minded, support the weak, be patient toward all men.*

He doth here press four duties which are so many further branches of sanctification, and all of them belong both to people and Ministers, to each in their own way. See in *doct.* 1. The first three are astricted to three sorts of persons for their object, as first the *unruly*, that is, who as disorderly souldiers (from which the word in the original is borrowed) do transgress the order, bounds and limits of their particular calling and station assigned them by God, and especially such as neglect their own business, and intrude themselves upon the affairs of others, as the Apostle explains himself, *2 Thes.* 3. 11. and those are to be *admonished*, that is, minded of their duty, yea and sharply rebuked for the neglect of it, for that the admonition here required doth include so much is clear from *2 Thes.* 2. 10, &c. A second sort are the *feeble-minded*, that is, as appears from the remedy prescribed, those who are so much dejected in mind with the sense of sin, or with the feeling or fear of afflictions that they are ready to faint in the way of their duty, *Prov.* 24. 10. and such are to be *comforted*, or animated against their discouragements from such grounds as the word of truth doth afford. A third sort are the *weak* or infirm, and this either in their Judgement through want of capacity, or information, *Rom.* 13. 1. or in practice, who being otherwise tender in their walk are carry-

ed aside in some one particular or other by a more than ordinary violence of some temptation, *Matth.* 26. 69. And those are to be *supported*, The word signifieth to underprop them, as a beam doth the house, to wit, by bearing, though not with their sins, *Gal.* 2. 11. yet with their persons, *Eph.* 4. 2. by tender yielding to them in the practice of things indifferent, *1 Cor.* 9. 20. by wise commending what appearance of good is in them, *Mat.* 12. 20. and by clearing of their mistakes with calmness and diligence, *Act.* 18. 25, 26. The fourth duty is not astricted unto any one sort, but extended *unto all* indifferently who are diseased either in body or mind, and especially such as are troubled with any spiritual malady; to wit, the exercise of *patience*; whereby it seemeth according to the present scope, he enjoyneth continuance in the forementioned duties, and others of the like nature, without wearying much less hopeles surceasing, *2 Tim.* 2. 25. notwithstanding that success for a time be wanting. *Doct.* 1. The visible Church of Christ, is constitute not of Angels or Saints made perfect, but men of sinful infirmities, and those of several sorts in several persons; and therefore the Church may be well compared to an Hospital full of sickly persons, labouring under a great variety of spiritual diseases, some under one sort, some under another, and consequently all of them fit objects upon which Jesus Christ, the great Physitian of souls, may exercise some one or other of his spiritual cures; for, *Paul* representeth this Church as such, wherein some were *unruly*, some *feeble-minded*, and a third sort *weak*. 2. The Lords Ministers and people may  
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not on this pretence rent and separate from the society and fellowship of visible Churches, but are to employ their skill and experience in things spiritual, under Christ the great Physician, every one in his own place and station, in administering some suitable cure and remedy to the diseased members of Christs visible body, as they may have access and opportunity : for, so doth *Paul* here enjoin them, not to separate from, but to *warn the unruly, &c.* 3. As there is a great variety of spiritual distempers incident to several diseased patients, and the disease of one is not the disease of all, but almost every patient doth labour under his own distemper, which is, at least in some circumstances, different from the disease of others ; So it concerneth those who would prove successful Physicians in curing the spiritual distempers of diseased Christians, to be well acquainted with the temper of their Patient and the nature of his disease, that they may the better know how to administer a suitable cure ; for, he shews that there are some more *unruly*, some *feeble-minded*, some *weak*, and implyeth that those who were to administer the prescribed cures should know the disease before they meddle with the cure : *warn the unruly, &c.* 4. As Christ the great Physician hath provided a great variety of spiritual cures and remedies, answerable to the several distinct infirmities of his diseased people ; So every cure is not fitted or to be applyed by Christs servants unto all diseases, otherwise they prove Physicians of no value, and by a wrong application do make the malady worse : But every disease must have its own proper cure ;  
for,

for, he enjoyns them to *warn the unruly, to comfort the feeble-minded, to support the weak,* 5. Though every spiritual patient almost, as said is, hath his own distinct distemper; yet there is one which is common almost unto all, to wit, a great unwillingness to admit of a suitable cure, and no small difficulty to be wrought upon by it: and this doth call for one common remedy unto all, to wit patience, and indefatigable diligence in Christians who are called to be Physicians one unto another: *be patient towards all men,* saith he.

Ver. 15. *See that none render evil for evil unto any man: but ever follow that which is good, both among your selves, and to all men.*

The Apostle presseth, in this verse, another branch of sanctification: and because of our propenseness to the sin forbidden, he premits the word, *see,* or take heed, and beware. The duty enjoyned belongeth unto all without exception, to wit, that first, they would abstain from recompensing *evil for evil,* or wrong for wrong *unto any,* he meaneth private revenge; for the publick execution of justice by the Magistrate in punishing those who do evil, is not here forbidden, *Rom. 13.4.* And next that *they follow,* or, (as the word implyeth, with a sort of eagerness, as the hunter doth the prey) pursue that which is good, where, by *good,* must be meant the exercise of pity and the good of beneficence towards, even their enemies, as being here opposed to the act of private revenge, see *Gal. 6. 10.* and this he will have to be pursued  
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ever, that is, constantly without any interruption by multiplication or heightning of *injuries*, and both among *themselves*, who were Christians, and to all men even to the Heathens among whom they lived. *Doct. 1.* The duty of abstaining from private revenge, and of recompensing good to those who wrong us, is a duty from which, of any other, our corrupt nature is most averse, as being most contrary to those woful principles of pride, self-love, impatience, and malice, which are imprinted upon the hearts of all by nature : and therefore a lesson which neither ancient Philosophers, yea nor Scribes or Pharisees, *Matth. 5. 43, &c.* but only Christ himself hath taught : for our natural averfeness to this duty is implied in the word *see*, take heed, or beware, which is prefixed to it : *See that none render evil for evil.* But, *2.* It is a duty which the Lord Christ hath most strictly enjoyned, not by way of counsel only, ( as the Papiſts affirm of this and other duties, to wit, that they are so commanded as that they may be omitted without sin, or hazard of punishment ) but by way of most peremptory precept binding all, and that under the hazard of Divine displeasure, *Prov. 24. 17, 18.* for, he enjoyns it here with a peremptory *see*, and will have all obliged to it : *See that none render evil for evil.* *3.* A Christian mans care to resist sin should be exercised about those sins most, to which he finds himself by nature most inclined, as those to the committing whereof, Satan, who knoweth our natural propension well, will set himself to tempt us most, *Joh. 12. 6.* with *Matth. 14. 11.* for, therefore doth he enjoyn them to watch

watch against, and in a special manner resist, this sin of private revenge : *See that none render evil for evil.* 4. This duty of abstaining from private revenge is incumbent unto all toward all, so that the gallantry, greatness, or power of none doth give him exemption and liberty to usurp upon Gods place, by avenging himself for real or apprehended injuries and affronts, upon any, even though he were but his equal or underling, the Lord having in this case provided his ordinance of publick Magistracy, for repairing of wrongs, *Rom. 13. 4.* and having enjoyned unto all the exercise of faith and patience under those injuries whereof they can have no redress by that mean, *Psal. 37. 7.* for, he saith, *see that none render evil for evil unto any.* 5. So devilish are some men, that having done the injury themselves they cannot hear of reconciliation with, or readmission unto the favour of him whom they have injured, though he not only make an offer of it unto them, but also press them and follow on upon them with the offer : and yet even in this case, the patient man must not turn vindictive and impatient, but should lengthen his patience and strengthen his resistance against all tentations and motions to private revenge, so long as the malicious temper of his adversary remaineth, though it were for ever ; for, he bids them *ever follow* and pursue *that which is good.* The word signifieth to pursue a thing that flyeth away from us. 6. Though there be some degrees and duties of love which ought to be ascribed to some persons more than to others, *1 Tim. 5. 8.* yet there are others due unto all, even to our enemies, as mainly  
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this act of love specified in the text, the requital of good for evil, there being somewhat in all men, even in the worst of men, to draw forth the exercise of our love and affection in some of its acts and effects towards him; as that he hath some remainder of Gods image in him, *Rom. 1. 20.* is of the same flesh, *Isa. 58 — 7.* and blood with our selves, *Act. 17. 26.* possibly endued with some special gifts of valour, love to his country, *2 Sam. 10. 12.* which ought to be loved and cherished by us; for, he bids *follow good both among your selves and to all men.*

Ver. 16. *Rejoice evermore.*

17. *Pray without ceasing.*

18. *In every thing give thanks : for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Three further branches or duties of sanctification are pressed in these three verses. As first that they would *rejoice*, that is, labour not only to keep their hearts free from anxiety and discouragement arising from their manifold causes of sorrow and grief, but also, with some measure of spiritual delight, to follow upon and be taken up with the sense and sweetness which floweth either from the consideration of the excellency of Christ himself, *Cant. 5. 10, &c.* and of his usefulness unto them, *Psal. 118. 1.* together with their interest in him, *Cant. 2. 16.* or from the observation of his care and providence toward them, *1 Sam. 17. 32.* from the testimony of a good conscience, *2 Cor. 1. 12.* and from things worldly in so far only as they are pledges



pledges of Gods favour, and furtherances of a better life, *Levit.* 23. 40. This is the duty of rejoycing here pressed which he willeth to be gone about *evermore* under all cases, and at all times : Not as if the case of the Lords people did not sometimes call them to mourning, *Eccles.* 3. 4. but that even their sorrow and mourning for things grievous should be so much conform to that the Lord calleth for in such cases as it do not mar, but rather further, their rejoycing in the Lord, and in the testimony of a good conscience, *2 Cor.* 6. 10. This is contained *v.* 16. Secondly, because they did stand in continual need of Gods help, either for attaining of good things necessary and wanting, *Matth.* 6. 11. *Phil.* 3. 13. or for removing of things evil and present, *Job* 14. 1. *1 Joh.* 1. 8, 10. therefore he excites them to the exercise of prayer joyned with attention and fervent seriousness of mind, as having vows and undertakings joyned with it ( for so much doth the word in the original imply ) and this *without ceasing*, ( not as if they were to do nothing else, *2 Thes.* 3. 10. but they were not to cease upon their not obtaining a present grant, *Luke* 18. 1, &c. they were to be frequent in prayer, *Psal.* 57. 17. and alwayes when they had opportunity, to lift up their hearts either in set and solemn prayer or heavenly ejaculations, which latter may be practised without interruption of our other lawful employments, *Neh.* 2. 4. This is *v.* 17. Thirdly, he exhorts them to the duty of *giving thanks*, to wit, unto God, *Eph.* 5. 20. which consists in a sensible acknowledgment of favours received from him, *2 Sam.* 7. 18, 19. and

and in expressing our sense of them, either by words, *Psal.* 104. 1. or works, ( *1 Cor.* 10. 31. ) to his praise : and this he will have discharged in every thing, that is, in all estates, *Jam.* 1. 9, 10. and for his overruling every thing which befalls us with much mercy and moderation, *Ezra* 9. 13. and for our good, *Rom.* 8. 28. all which duties and especially this of thanksgiving he urges from the authority of God injoyning them unto all men, *Rom.* 1. 21. but more especially unto Christians and real believers. The reason whereof is hinted at in this, that not only his will enjoinning is made known, *Psal.* 147. 19. but also constant matter and furniture for obeying his will in all those things is conveyed unto them in and by *Jesus Christ*, *Phil.* 4. 13. whatever be their case otherwayes, *Act.* 5. 41. This is *v.* 18. *Dott.* 1. The duty of rejoicing in the Lord ( as it is set forth in the exposition ) and constancy in it, is a sovereign antidote against impatience and a spirit of revenge for injuries received, in so far as it sweetneth every dispensation, and doth elevate the heart of him, who is exercised with it above all things earthly, whether prosperous or adverse ; so as he will not willingly, either by immoderate delight in the one, or bitter resentment of the other, be diverted from, or interrupted in, his sweet and excellent task of rejoicing in the Lord ; for, *Paul* insinuates so much while he immediately subjoyneth to the former dissuasive from private revenge, this other precept, *rejoice evermore.* 2. Though even believers, through their own default, do often droop, *Psal.* 42. 11. and of all men living are sometimes most dejected

dejected and heartless, *Psal.* 88. 3, &c. when either, through untenderness, they have provoked the Lord to hide his face, *Psal.* 30. 6. or in their petted discouragement they refuse to be comforted, *Psal.* 77. 3. Yet there are alwayes grounds for rejoycing unto such; though not to their sense, yet to their faith, *Psal.* 60. 6. though not in themselves, yet in the Lord, *Phil.* 4. 4. and in what he hath already done, *Psal.* 71. 10, 11. or at least hath promised to do unto them, *Phil.* 1. 6. For, this precept to *rejoyce evermore*, implyeth that there will be ever grounds of rejoycing. 3. The joy of Gods people which is allowed upon them by the Lord is not light and carnal, casting them loose and idle in the practice of commanded duties, but spiritual and solid, carrying along with it conscientious diligence and circumspectness in duty, *Psal.* 2. 11. and especially in the duty of prayer, as that without which this rejoycing frame of heart can neither be attained, nor yet entertained and kept; *Job* 27. 10. For, therefore doth he, to the precept of *rejoycing evermore*, subjoyn immediately this other, *pray without ceasing*. 4. Frequency in serious and attentive prayer is of excellent use, as for other ends, *Matth.* 7. 7, 8. so for this, to keep the heart alwayes in a rejoycing frame and temper, in so far as there is not a more ready way to be eased of our discouraging weights, which keep our spirits at under, that they cannot mount up in this heavenly duty of rejoycing, than to cast the weight and trouble of all that grieves us over upon God by prayer, *Phil.* 4. 5. For, therefore doth he subjoyn, *pray without ceasing*.

5. Christians

3. Christians should be so ordered by prudence that their intenseness upon, and diligence in one duty do not make them neglective or careless of any other : For, he will have them so to *rejoyce evermore* as they also *pray without ceasing*, and so to pray as that *in every thing they give thanks*. 6. That the duties of prayer and thanksgiving do agree well together, See upon *Eph. 1. v. 16. doct. 1. pray without ceasing, in every thing give thanks*. 7. As there can be no such ample cause of thanksgiving in this life, but there will be still some constant need and reason for prayer, there being alwayes somewhat wanting even when we enjoy most, *2 Cor. 5. 6*. So there can be no such urgent and multiplyed necessities for exciting to prayer, but upon narrow search there will be found some causes for thanksgiving, if it were but this that our case is not so evil but the Lord might justly have made it worse, *Ezra 9. 13*. and that we are kept from total succumbing or sinking under it, *Lam. 3. 21*. For, while he enjoyneth both to *pray without ceasing*, and *in every thing to give thanks*, it is implied that there will be alwayes reasons for both. 8. One excellent mean for engaging our hearts in the conscientious practice of the forementioned duties, of constant rejoycing, assiduous prayer, and continued thanksgiving, is, seriously to consider that our performance of them is not a matter indifferent, or left unto us to do or not do as a piece of our liberty, and as we find our hearts in a temper for them, but most strictly enjoyned us by the sovereign will of God the Law-giver ; so that our neglect of those doth make

us guilty, as the breach of any other of the commands, whether by not sanctifying the Sabbath, or by taking his name in vain: for, he inferreth the practice of them all from his will enjoining, *for this is the will of God*, saith he. 9. Precepts for duty from God the Law-giver are then rightly looked on by us, when considered as they are revealed and enjoined to us in Christ, who hath made the insupportable burthen of precepts (*Gal. 3. 10.*) an easie yoke unto his followers, *Matth. 11. 30.* while he pardoneth their failings, *Micah 7. 18.* renews their strength, maketh them mount up and not be weary, *Isa. 40. 31.* strengthneth them to do whatever he enjoyneth, *Phil. 4. 13.* so that his commandments are not grievous, *1 Joh. 5. 3.* For, he propones Gods will unto them, to be considered by them as it was revealed and enjoined to them in Christ, *This is the will of God*, saith he, *in Christ Jesus concerning you.*

Ver. 19. *Quench not the spirit.*

20. *Despise not prophesyings.*

He doth here press two other branches of sanctification. The first is set down in a Metaphor taken from fire or gross material light, which is properly said to be extinguished or quenched, and that either by withholding combustible matter, or by casting on the contrary element of water. And the word is here applyed to the spirit of God, who is as fire giving both the light of knowledge, *Eph. 1. 17, 18.* and heat of love and affection, *Luke 24. 32.* and by the *spirit* here is not so much to be

be meant the spirit of God in his own person and nature, as in his gifts and holy motions or incitements to duty, which are quenched, weakned, lost or abolished, in our selves or others, either by our negligence in improving them; *Matth.* 25. 29. and by our slight and formal use of means whereby they are entertained, *2 Tim.* 4. 3, 4. or by too great diligence in doing evil, *Isa.* 29. 13, 14. and especially by contemning or despising his gifts in others which keeps them at under, *1 Cor.* 12. 21. and by resisting his motions and incitements to good in our selves, *Jer.* 6. 10. This is the sin here forbidden, and by consequence the contrary duty commanded, to wit, that the gifts and motions of the spirit of God, whether in our selves or others, be carefully cherished, *2 Tim.* 1. 14. and continually stirred up by the use of prayer, hearing, and of all other means thereto appointed, *2 Tim.* 1. 6. This is *v.* 19. The second branch here pressed is subservient to the former, *despise not prophesie*, where *prophesie* is not taken in a strict sense for prediction or foretelling of things to come, as *Act.* 21. 9. (for that was neither so common in the Church, nor yet to continue) but for the explication; and application of the word of God, either by extraordinary or ordinary Ministers, even that which we call *preaching*, as *Rom.* 12. 6. *1 Cor.* 14. 3. So the thing commanded is that they would not *despise*, or set at nought, the publick preaching of Gods word by sent Ministers, but rather set an high price upon it; for the word rendred *despise* by an usual flowr of speech doth signifie much more than is expressed. This

is v. 20 ——— Doct. 1. So insufficient are even the regenerate of themselves to discharge commanded duties in a spiritual manner, 2 *Cor.* 2. 5. and to persevere in them for any space of time together, *Exod.* 17. 12. that there is an absolute necessity of constantly renewed supplies of influence from the spirit of God for their incitement to duty, *Cant.* 4. 16. for their through-bearing in duty, *Joh.* 15. 5. for the renewing of their strength, liveliness and vigour of spirit, when it is much abated and blunted by their long continuance at duty; *Isa.* 40. 31. For, therefore, as a necessary help for performing the forementioned duties of *rejoycing evermore, praying without ceasing, and of giving thanks* in every thing, he enjoyneth that they would carefully cherish the gifts, motions and incitements of Gods spirit, *quench not the spirit*, saith he. 2. Though the saving gifts of the spirit of God, and such as accompany salvation, cannot be utterly lost, 1 *Joh.* 3. 9. yet their actings may for a time be intermitted, *Cant.* 5. 2. yea themselves, as to some degrees, much abated, *Rev.* 2. 4. and his common gifts of knowledge, memory, historical faith, legal repentance and remorse for sin, totally lost, *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. and his suggestions and incitements to holy duties, as they often are repelled by many, *Psal.* 81. 10, 11. so being frequently repelled, they do utterly cease in some and are wholly extinguished, *Eph.* 4. 18. For, the dissuasion from *quenching the spirit* implyes that the spirit, in his gifts and motions, may be quenched, to wit, in the forementioned respects, as the Scriptures cited do clear.

3. The

3. The gifts and motions of the spirit of God are of such a nature, that if they be not entertained and cherished, they are thereby *ipso facto* quenched, weakned, and in progress of time, utterly abolished: For, therefore he doth not bid them cherish, but only *quench not the spirit*, implying that they behoved to cherish it, otherwise they could not but quench it. 4. There is not any so far advanced in the way of grace and piety, but they stand in need of being helpt and bettered by the publick preaching of the Lords word by his sent Ministers; For, he enjoyneth even those *Thessalonians*, whom he had formerly so much commended, *chap. 1. 4, &c.* to attend the publick Preaching of Gods word, *despise not prophesie*, saith he. 5. Constant attendance upon the Word preached by sent Ministers is a singular help to beget and entertain the gifts and motions of the spirit of God to good in our hearts. And careless neglect, much more contempt, of that ordinance, is the ready way to quench and extinguish any motions to good, any checks or challenges for evil from the spirit of the Lord, and consequently doth end in gross profanity at last; For, unto that dissuative from quenching the spirit, he immediately subjoyns, *despise not prophesie*, or publick preaching. 6. This ordinance of publick preaching, as it is most useful and necessary in it self: so it hath been even in the time of the Apostles, and yet is in hazard to be contemned, what through the insufficiency, *Hos. 4. 6.* or unministerial conversation, *Mal. 2. 8.* or the proud and lofty dividing humour of some who preach it, *1 Pet. 5. 3.* and *3 Joh. 9.* and



256 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

what through the pride and self-conceit of some who should be hearers, as if they stood in no need of it, *Heb. 10. 25.* and blindness of understanding in others, who not considering the wisdom of God in appointing such an ordinance, *1 Cor. 1. 21.* do see no beauty or worth in it, for which they should respect it, *1 Cor. 1. 18.* for, *Paul* both did see and foresee such an hazard, and therefore enjoyneth, *despise not prophesie.*

*Ver. 21. Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.*

*22. Abstain from all appearance of evil.*

In these two verses are the two last particular branches of sanctification here enjoined. By the first he doth guard the former whereof *v. 20.* for, lest he had thereby seemed to have enjoined obedience unto every thing which Ministers Preach, he doth therefore first command them to *prove* and try accurately by the written word, *Act. 17. 11.* as Goldsmiths do Gold by a touchstone, (as the word implyeth) and the thing to be tryed is *all things*, to wit, all those things which are delivered in Preaching by them who are sent Ministers, and not convict of heresie, for, if they be not sent, the Lords people are not to hear them, *Joh. 10. 5.* nor yet if they be known hereticks, whose mouths should be stopt, *Tit. 1. 11.* Next, to *hold fast* (or, as the word signifieth, to hold forcibly and with both hands, against all who would withhold) *that which is good*, or which after tryal should be found good doctrine firmly grounded upon the word,

word, and consequently to abstain from that which should be found evil or unsound. This is *v. 21*. The second branch here pressed is that they would *abstain from* and eschew not only that which is really and in it self evil and sinful, but also that which hath any *appearance*, shew or representation of evil, that is, whatever (not being otherwise commanded by God, *Exod. 12. 35, 36.*) may give just ground unto unprejudic'd beholders (who are not malicious, *Gal. 2. 4, 5.* even though they be otherwise weak, *1 Cor. 10. 28.*) to suspect the guilt of some real evil in him, who practiseth it, such are dangerous phrases of speech in Preaching though not plainly heretical, *1 Tim. 6. 3.* sitting at meat in an Idols temple, *1 Cor. 10. 21.* familiar and unnecessary conversing without a call with profane lewd persons, *Luk. 22. 55.* or in secret suspect places with persons of a different Sex, chiefly if he or she be evil reported of. This is *v. 22. Doct. 1.* So foolish and inconsiderate are most men naturally, that when they are exercised in flying from the one sinful extream, they are in no small hazard to be carry'd unawares upon the other. Their great intentness upon the evil which they flye from, and is alwayes before them, doth make them not to ponder or advert unto the snare which is behind them. *Paul* implyeth so much, while having dissuaded from the one extream of despising publick preaching, *v. 20.* he presently dissuadeth them from the other, of giving blind obedience to their Ministers, while he saith, *prove all things.*

2. Though all private Christians have not re-

ceived an equal measure of gifts, *Rom. 14. 1.* yet the Lord hath bestowed a spirit of discerning, in a greater or a lesser measure, upon all, by which, if diligently and tenderly improved in the search of Scripture (*Act. 17. 11.*) accompanied with prayer (*Psal. 119. 19.*) they may be enabled so to judge of what they hear delivered in preaching, as to choose and embrace what is sound and nourishing, and refuse and reject whatever is erroneous and hurtful : for, if they had not such a spirit of discerning bestowed upon them by God, it should have been in vain to enjoin them to *prove all things, and hold fast that which is good.* 3. The spirit of discerning, bestowed by God on private Christians, should be exercised in judging of their Ministers doctrine ; not in order to their passing a judicial sentence upon him ; for they are not his Judges, *1 Cor. 14. 32.* nor yet to the venting of their carping censures against him, making his Ministry in all things unfavoury unto others, but in order to the regulating of their own practice, in chusing what is right, and refusing what is wrong of what they hear ; for, he enjoyneth the exercise of their judgement of discretion in relation to their own practice, even that they *may hold fast what is good.* 4. As a fixt resolution to be constant in the maintenance of any opinion should flow from rational conviction, after exact search, that the opinion which we hold is true and sound, otherwise our constancy and fixedness is but self-willed pertinacy, *Jer. 44. 16.* So when, after exact enquiry, truth is found out, we ought to be so fixed and

and peremptory in our resolution to maintain it, as that we may not waver or be tossed to and fro with any wind of doctrine which is contrary unto it, *Ephes. 4. 14.* for, before they resolve, he bids them *prove*, and then *hold fast* without wavering what after tryal is found *good*. 5. A conscientious tender Christian must not, yea will not only have a regard to the all-seeing eye of God, by abstaining from what is evil in it self and in his sight for which his conscience might smite him, but also to the eye of men, by abstaining from what hath the appearance of evil unto them, and for which his good name might be justly smitten and wounded by others : he'l study so to walk as that he may not only stand himself, but that occasion of falling by his indiscreet use of Christian liberty be not given unto others. He'l labour to be on his guard not only against some tentations, but all, and not only at some times, but alwayes : for, this is enjoyned in the last place, as the highest step of a tender walk, to *abstain from the appearance of evil*, by which a mans name might justly suffer or his neighbour be scandalized, and to abstain not only from some, but *all appearance of evil*.

Ver.

Ver. 23. *And the very God of peace sanctifie you wholly : and I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

In the third part of the Chapter he concludeth the whole Epistle, and first, in this verse by prayer to God, that he would work those graces and duties of sanctification in them which he hath pressed upon them from *chap. 4. v. 3.* The particulars in which prayer are, first, the stile given to God, he is the *very God of peace*, as being the author of all sanctified peace among men, *Psal. 147. 14.* and chiefly of their peace with God flowing from justification, *Rom. 5. 1.* which epithete, it seemeth, doth here serve as a ground for faith to rely on for obtaining the thing sought, to wit, that he would sanctifie them, because he was become a God of peace to them, having justified them, *Rom. 8. 30.* The second particular is the thing prayed for, that he would, first, *sanctifie* them, whereby must be meant the making them to grow in sanctification, described *chap. 4. v. 3.* for they were already sanctified in part. And, next, *preserve them blameless*, whereby is meant their preservation by the power of God in the state of grace without apostasie or backsliding, which sanctification, the progress and perseverance wherein is here prayed for, is described from its universality in extending it self to the whole man ; set down, first, more generally in the word, *wholly*, next, in a particular enumeration of the several parts of the whole man, three in

in number, 1. *His spirit*, which, when contradistinguished to the *soul*, as it is here, doth signifie the understanding and knowing part of the man. 2. *His soul*, whereby, being distinguished from the *spirit*, must be meant his will and affections. 3. *His body*, that is, the outward man by which the soul doth act. The third particular in the prayer is a date or term-day condescended upon, to wit, the *coming of the Lord Jesus Christ*, which expresseth not only the time how long he desires that Gods care in preserving and making them to grow in sanctification should last, but, also the term-day when this petition shall be answered to the full, and believers made wholly blameless in holiness, without all spot of ignorance in their understanding, and disconformity to Gods will, or perverseness in their will and affections, or of any sin whatsoever in their body or outward members, all this shall be *unto*, or as the word may read *in the second coming of Christ* the Lord to judge the world. Hence Learn 1. A Minister is not to think himself exonerated, when he hath pressed the practice of all necessary duties upon the people of his charge, but he must be tenderly solicitous about the success of his pains among them : and more particularly, It is a necessary piece of a Ministers duty to be frequent and fervent in prayer with God for them, beseeching him earnestly to work that in them, which he hath pressed upon them ; for, the Apostle having pressed upon them the several duties of sanctification, from *v. 3. of chap. 4.* doth betake himself to God by prayer that he would *sanctifie them wholly*. 2. Precepts and exhortations

tions to duty which are frequent in Scripture, do not infer any power in mans self, or in his free-will to give obedience unto what he is commanded. They only shew it is our duty to obey, *Mic.* 6. 8. and such a duty as do it we must if we would be saved, *Luk.* 13. 3. and are an outward mean by which the spirit of God doth effectually work that in his people which he requireth from them, *Cant.* 5. 2. with 4. for if they had sufficient strength in themselves, as of themselves, to obey, what he hath pressed upon them, to what end should he pray so fervently here unto the *God of peace to sanctifie them*. 5. As the grace of sanctification is not perfected at one instant, but carryed on by degrees until it be perfected at death, *1 Cor.* 13. 9. there being still some remainders of the body of death in the best, *Rom.* 7. 24. for keeping them humble, *2 Cor.* 12. 7. for giving them daily errands to the fountain of free grace for pardon, *1 Job.* 2. 1. and renewed strength, *1 Cor.* 12. 8, 9. and for making them long to be dissolved and freed from sin root and branch, *2 Cor.* 5. 4. So a mean degree of sanctification even though it be undoubtedly sincere, should not be rested upon as satisfactory, but daily growth and progress therein endeavoured, without any full satisfaction or quieting of our minds in any degree or measure, until sanctifying grace be fully perfected in glory: for, seeing they were already sanctified in part, it must be growth in sanctification for which he prayeth, which implyeth that their sanctification was not perfected, and that they themselves should much more endeavour to grow in it, and this until

Christ

Christs second coming, if their death should not prevent it. And *the very God of peace sanctifie you wholly* ——— *unto the coming, &c.* 4. As God becometh a God of peace and reconciled unto none but to those whom he sanctifieth, and in whom, he worketh a gracious change ; So he sanctifieth none but those to whom he becometh a God of peace first ; and therefore that our endeavours after holiness may have success, we should have a care to get our peace made with God in the first place : for, he joyneth these two, peace with God, and sanctification from God, and maketh the latter to follow upon the former : *and the very God of peace sanctifie you.* 5. As the first beginnings of sanctifying grace, ( *Ezek. 36. 26.* ) so our growth and progress in it is wholly from God. It is true, there are some principles of a new life wrought in us at first conversion, which have their own activity and concurrence for carrying on the work of grace in us afterward, *1 Cor. 13. 4, 5.* but as they are created in us by God at the first, ( *Ezek. 36. 26.* ) so they must be excited to their work, *Cant. 4. 16.* upheld and strengthened in their work, *Luk. 22. 32.* and blessed by God with the success of growth in grace following upon their work above any efficacy that is in themselves, *Phil. 1. 6.* and therefore our growth in grace, doth yet remain intirely and wholly Gods work, for he ascribeth growth in grace to God as the author, while he prayeth the *very God of peace to sanctifie them.* 6. So many are those by-ways of errour, *2 Pet. 3. 17.* profanity, *Heb. 12. 16.* formality, &c. *2 Tim. 3. 5.* to divert us from the way of holiness after we are engaged



engaged in it, so many unexpected difficulties do meet us in the way, *Act.* 14. 22. and such is our levity and readines to repent our undertaking, *Joh.* 6. 66. our weakness to resist tentations, *Matth.* 26. 70. and easines to be led aside unto those other by-ways, *Jer.* 25. that there is no less need than of the power of God who did at first engage us, to preserve us carefully, powerfully, and as it were with a strong guard, in the way of holiness; otherwise we cannot long stand upright in it, *1 Pet.* 1. 5. for, he prayeth unto God to *preserve* them in holiness, The word in the original signifieth to preserve accurately, as he who watcheth at the doors of a prison and is used *Act.* 4. 3. 5. 18. & 24. 23. 7. Even the understanding and knowing part of the regenerate is but renewed in part and standeth in need to be more and more sanctified by reason of a great deal of ignorance, *1 Cor.* 13. 9. uncertainty, *Mark* 9. 24. curiosity, *Joh.* 21. 21, 22. proneness to mistake the Lords way of dealing, *Isa.* 49. 14. and several other infirmities which are in the understandings even of the best; for, therefore doth he pray that God would *sanctifie* as well as *preserve* even the renewed *Thessalonians* in their spirit. *And I pray God your whole spirit, &c.* 8. The will and affections also of the regenerate man are but renewed in part and stand in need to be more and more sanctified; there being a great deal not only of peremptory unwillingness, sometimes, in the will to good, whereby it sometimes refuseth, *John* 4. 9. and frequently shifreth and delayeth the practice of necessary duty, *Hag.* 1. 2. but also of an hankering

hankering inclination unto evil, whereby it sometimes closeth with sin against knowledge, 2 Sam. 11. 4. and sometimes excites the understanding to find out excuses and subterfuges to make sin appear no sin, or but a little one, that it may well sin with less reluctancy, Cant. 5. 3. For, he prayeth also that their *soul*, that is, their will and affections may be sanctified, *that your whole spirit and soul*, &c. 9. As the Lord doth not only require inward sanctity, in the understanding, will and affections, but also outward, in the body and all its members, ( see chap. 4. v. 4. doct. 1. ) So even the truly regenerate have not their very outward man so well reformed, but there is need to have it more and more sanctified. Even the body and its parts, especially the organs of sense and speech, and the instruments of the loco-motive faculty, have in them some of that natural stiffness and averseness from being exercised about good and profitable objects, and proneness joyned with agility to be employed in evil, which is spoken of Rom. 3. 10, &c. For, he prayeth that their body also may be more sanctified. *And I pray God your whole spirit soul and body*, &c. 10. As there is not any the least principal part and particle of the body, and the meanest faculty of the soul and such as are only subservient to the most principal faculties of it, but they are one way or other defiled with sin, and stand in need of sanctifying grace ; So there is not any, no not the meanest of those in a renewed mans soul or body, to which the Lord doth not extend his special care, not only in changing and sanctifying it at the first, but also in making that begun

begun change to increase and grow, and in preserving the whole man and all his parts, even to the meanest, in that gracious frame and plyableness to good unto which he hath brought it. Otherwise if the meanest member of the body or faculty of the soul were left to their own keeping, they could not choose but suddenly miscarry; for, he prayeth that *their whole spirit, whole soul, and whole body may be sanctified and preserved by God*, and doubtless he prayeth for nothing to them, but what the Lord doth ordinarily to the renewed. 11. As all believers shall attain to their full stature in grace, even to a perfect man, at Christs second coming, and be freed from all necessity of any further growing in grace after that; So though they will alwayes and to all eternity stand in need to be preserved by God in their glorious state, and accordingly shall be preserved by him, *Joh. 17. 24.* yet because they are now, while in their present militant state, obnoxious to more tentations, *Eph. 6. 12.* and not sufficiently confirmed in good, *1 Cor. 10. 12.* therefore they stand in more need of preserving garce now than they will then, when there shall be no devil nor wicked world to tempt them, *Rev. 20. 10. & 21. v. 27.* and nothing of a body of death in themselves to comply with tentations, *Heb. 12. — 23.* as there is now: for, he makes Christs second coming, the date how long he would have God to continue in sanctifying and preserving them, which is to be understood in the way expressed in the doctrine, *unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ*, saith he.

Ver:

Ver. 24. *Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it.*

He concludeth, secondly, with a promise, wherein he assures them that God *will do it*, to wit, what he presently prayed for, even sanctifie them wholly, and preserve them blameless; and that because *God is faithful*, that is, alwayes the same; and like himself, who will certainly perform whatever he hath promised, and therefore he would certainly preserve them, seeing he had promised so much in effect unto them, when he did effectually call them, at least to as many of them as he had so called. For effectual calling is the first breaking out and open declaration of Gods secret and eternal purpose to preserve and save those whom he calleth, *Rom. 8. 30.*

*Doct. 1.* Our prayers put up to God, whether in behalf of our selves or others, should be grounded upon some explicate or implicate promise, and consequently flow from faith that God will grant what we ask according to the absolute or conditional tenour of the promise; for, *Pauls* prayers were grounded upon such a promise, and did flow from such confidence even *that he would do it*, as he here expresseth.

*2.* Most absolute and certain promises may not weaken our diligence in prayer for obtaining the thing promised, but rather incite us to it. Prayer being the mean appointed of God in the conscientious practice whereof he useth to bestow the good things promised, *Ezek. 36. 37.* for, *Paul* did pray for their preservation, *v. 23.* though he certainly knew, and accordingly doth promise

unto them, *that God would do it.* 3. As the Lord doth still continue to call those, whom he hath once effectually called by giving them renewed sights of their natural sin and misery, 1 *Tim.* 1. 13. and making them renew their gripes by faith on Jesus Christ the offered remedy, 1 *Tim.* 1. 15. So effectual calling and the powerful drawing of a soul from nature to grace, is a speaking pledge of Gods purpose to preserve the soul so called in the state of grace, and to make him grow in grace until at last he be without spot and blameless unto the end; for, the word *calleth* is in the present time, and noteth a continued action, and is here given as a pledge of Gods purpose to sanctifie and preserve them, *he that calleth you, who also will do it.* 4. No man can know, and much less draw any comfort from the Lords eternal purpose in election to save him and perfect the work of grace in him, until he be once effectually called and become a real convert from sin to holiness; yea, he makes effectual calling the first speaking evidence of election, and that which giveth access to look on the decree of election as a ground of expectation that he will perform the thing decreed; and therefore the promise here may be looked upon as conditional and suspended upon this condition if so they were called, *he that calleth you will also do it.* 5. There is no less than Gods fidelity impledged to believers for the most certain performance of all Gods gracious promises, so, that though they be unworthy to whom he should perform what is promised, yet his impledged faithfulness and truth of his nature is alwayes of that much worth as his respect

respect unto it will put him upon the performance ; for, *Paul sheweth Gods faithfulness is laid in pledge while he saith, faithful is he who calleth you who also will do it.*

Ver. 25. *Brethren pray for us.*

26. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*

He concludeth, thirdly, by recommending some particulars unto their care, as, first, that they would give him and his colleagues the help of their prayers, *v. 25.* and, secondly, that they, to wit, the Ministers and Church-rulers, to whom this and the following direction is given, would *greet* or *salute all the brethren* or members of their Church in his name, in testimony of his hearty affection to them, and take occasion hence to manifest and confirm their affection one to another among themselves, by giving them *a kiss*, which in those times and places was commonly used in civil salutations as the usual sign and testimony of affection. And he giveth this kiss the epithete of *holy*, to shew that it should be sincere and chaste, and neither unchaste nor hypocritical, *v. 26.* Besides what is observed upon *Eph. 6. v. 19. doct. 1, 2.* and *Col. 4. v. 3. doct. 1, 3.* Learn hence, 1. The Lord hath so dispensed his gifts and graces unto his people, that, though he giveth not an equal measure unto all ; yet to every one somewhat, and to the meanest so much as they may be, sometimes and in some respects, useful unto others who are most eminent ; that hereby mutual love may be kept among all, while none can say unto another, *I have no need of*

270 *A brief Exposition of the first Epistle*

*thee*, 1 Cor. 12. 21. for, Paul supponeth so much, and therefore calleth upon them all, even the meanest not excepted, to help him by their prayers, *brethren pray for us*, saith he. 2. It conduceth much to make way for success unto a Ministers pains among a people, that they know he loveth them ; otherwise if they doubt of this, they are prone to suspect, if not to cast at all that cometh from him, 2 Cor. 7. 2, 3. for, therefore the Apostle doth usually close his Epistles by saluting those to whom he writeth, in testimony of his affection to them, that what he writeth may have the more of weight with them ; *all the brethren*, saith he. 3. A Minister should labour so to entertain love betwixt him and the people, as that no expressions of his love, nor insinuations of his for that end do tend, much less be intended, to divide the Lords people among themselves, of purpose to make both or any of the dissentient parties more devoted and strictly tyed unto him ; but must endeavour that the same spirit of love which breatheth in him, may breath in all the Lords people toward one another : for, he doth so express his affection unto them that he willeth them to express, as it were, the same affection towards one another, while he saith, *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss*. 4. As it is not sufficient for Christians to carry inward good will and affection one to another, but necessary, sometimes, that inward love be made evident by some outward expressions and testimonies of the same ; So the Lords people ought not to scruple at, or upon groundless scruples to abstain from, any decent and innocent expression

pression of love and affection, which is ordinarily used in the times and places where they live. Singularity in such things is not Religion, neither is scrupulosity about them any point of tenderness : for, he bids them express their affection by that which was the usual sign and testimony thereof at those times. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.* But, 5. Even those external testimonies of love and respect may not be complementary, or used only as a piece of a mans good breeding or civility, much less as an engine to ensnare the party, towards whom they are used, unto a false belief that he is affected and loved where he is not ; *Luke 22. 48.* but they ought to be sincere and free from any base and sinful ingredient of that kind : So that even in external duties of common civility we are bound to exercise some one or other Christian and holy virtue : for, therefore doth he require that their affection be made evident by *an holy kiss*, or a kiss sanctified and made holy by the grace of sincere affection which is expressed by it, and from which it doth flow. *Greet all the brethren with an holy kiss.*

Ver. 27. *I charge you by the Lord that this Epistle be read unto all the holy brethren.*

The third recommendation is chiefly pressed upon their Ministers and Church-guides, to whom it seemeth this Epistle was sent immediately to be communicate unto the rest. Those he *chargeth by the Lord*, or (as the word implyeth and signifi-



erh ( see 1 *Sam.* 14. 24. *Matth.* 26. 63. ) he adjureth them as they would eschew the wrath and vengeance of the Lord Christ, so they would not keep up this *Epistle* unto themselves, but cause it to come to, and be plainly read in the hearing of *all the brethren* or Church-members whom he calleth *holy*. See upon *Phil.* 1. v. 1. *doct.* 5. Hence Learn 1. To debar and exclude the Lords people from acquainting themselves with Scripture, either by reading it themselves or hearing it read by others, is a most grievous sin, obliging the person or persons guilty to undergo the stroke of Gods eternal wrath & vengeance; And therefore not only should Scripture be translated unto the native language of every Nation where Christ hath a Church, that people may read it, and hear it, and be acquainted with it ; But also the Lords people themselves ought diligently to improve what helps of that kind are afforded for bringing them to intimate acquaintance with the mind of God revealed in Scripture, and look upon their so doing as a duty of greatest importance and weight ; for, *Paul* doth charge, or, adjure them with denunciation of Gods heavy vengeance in case they should not cause read this *Epistle* to all the holy brethren ; adjurations of which sort are not to be used but when duties of weight are charged. Now what *Paul* doth charge here about this *Epistle* was doubtless his mind in relation to other Scriptures ; seeing there is nothing peculiar to this *Epistle*, for which the Lords people should be made acquainted with it, that may not be said of other Scriptures also ; Besides, that the Apostle doth

doth elſewhere expreſs himſelf much to the ſame  
 purpoſe, of ſome others of his Epiſtles, *Col. 4. 16.*  
 and of all Scripture indefinitely, *Col. 3. 16.*  
*Doct. 2.* It concerneth Miniſters and Church-  
 guides, eſpecially, to ſee to it carefully that the  
 Lords people of their charge be acquainted with  
 Scripture, and, in order to this end, to incite them  
 to read it in ſecret, *Col. 3. 16.* to have it read in  
 their families, *Deut. 6. 9.* as alſo to labour upon  
 thoſe who have power, and whom it concerneth,  
 that Children and young ones of both Sexes be  
 trained up at Schools, at leaſt ſo far as they may  
 be able to read the Lords word diſtinctly in their  
 own native language : for, this charge is given to  
 the Church-guides, *I charge you by the Lord that*  
*this Epiſtle be read unto all the holy brethren,* ſaith he.  
 3. That Scripture be publickly read to the Lords  
 people aſſembled together for his worſhip; even  
 though it be not preſently expounded and applyed  
 by the Miniſter, is ſo far from being a part of wil-  
 worſhip, that it ſhould ſeem from this place to have  
 ſome ſtamp of divine authority put upon it, as upon  
 an ordinance uſeful in its own place, as for ſeveral  
 other ends, ſo, eſpecially, for acquainting the Lords  
 people with the language of the Holy Ghoſt  
 ſpeaking in Scripture, and with the Hiſtory of the  
 Bible, a great part whereof otherwiſe ſome may  
 poſſibly never ſo much as once hear with their ears,  
 though they live to many years : for, he chargeth  
 them not only to incite the Lords people to read  
 this Epiſtle themſelves and apart, but that it *be*  
*read unto all the holy brethren,* to wit, (as it ſeem-  
 eth) being aſſembled together.

Ver. 28. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen.*

He concludeth the Epistle, lastly, by his usual and confident farewell-wish for *our Lord Jesus Christ his grace*, or, favour, as the fountain, and all good things, as streams flowing from it, to be conveyed to them and continued with them. Besides what is already observed upon the like farewell-wish in the close of the four former Epistles. Hence Learn, So inexhaustible is the fountain of Gods free grace and favour, and so copious are the streams of all spiritual blessings flowing from it, that no such measure either of the one or the other can be attained by any, but more may be had; more is allowed, and more and more is daily to be sought and thirsted after: for, though real believers among them had received already a great measure of Gods grace and favour, in its sense and in its effects, yet he wishes unto them not only the continuance of what they had, but some further degree to be added as more of it, while he saith, *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

### POSTSCRIPT.

*The first Epistle unto the Thessalonians was written from Athens.*

Seeing this Epistle is written in the name also of *Timothy* and *Silvanus* as appeareth from chap. 1.

v. 1. Therefore it is most probable that it was not written from *Athens*, as the Postscript affirms, but rather from *Corinth*, because they two did not return, the one from *Thessalonica*, the other from *Berea*, unto *Paul*, before he went from *Athens* unto *Corinth*, as appears from *Act.* 18. 5. and *1 Thes.* 3. 1. where *Paul* affirms that when he had dismissed *Timotheus* he was left alone at *Athens*, and therefore had not these his two Collegues with him there, and consequently could not write this Epistle in their names from thence. Besides, as the learned observe, in several ancient copies there is no mention made of the place from whence it was written. Hence Learn, That the postscript of *Pauls* Epistles, or those words which are set after the close of his Epistles, designing alwayes the whence they were written, and sometimes the person or persons by whom they were sent, are no part of Canonical Scripture, not alwayes firm, nor written by the Apostle himself, but added afterwards by some men, either unlearned or certainly inconsiderate, according to their own opinion. And therefore though the Postscripts affixed to the former four Epistles had nothing, for what can be known, dissonant from truth as this hath, yet I did not dare to draw any observations from them, as if they had been of equal authority with the Epistles themselves.

FINIS.





A BRIEF  
**EXPOSITION**  
 OF THE SECOND  
**EPISTLE of PAUL**  
 TO THE  
**THESSALONIANS.**

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The ARGUMENT.



**P**AUL having not long before this written the preceding Epistle to the Church at Thessalonica, wherein he had shewn his resolute purpose to come and see them ( 1 Thes. 3. 10, 11.) and being yet as formerly, 1 Thes. 2. 18.) hindered, he hath been informed that not only their sad sufferings did yet continue, chap. 1. 4. but also that some, having taken occasion from what he wrote, 1 Thes. 4. and 5. concerning

cerning Christ his second coming unexpectedly to judgement, did spread a fond and fabulous opinion as if Christ had been to come in that present age, chap. 2. 2. whereupon some among them did cast by all care of their particular callings, and others, abusing the simplicity of those, and having given themselves unto Idleness, did live upon their means, chap. 3. 11. Therefore, and upon those occasions, he writeth this second Epistle unto them ; His scope wherein, is, to confirm them in the doctrine of faith and practice of piety against both persecutors and seducers, ( which after the inscription, chap. 1. v. 1. ) he endeavoureth to effectuate, first, by comforting them under their present sad sufferings, chap. 1. Secondly, by refuting the forementioned error, from this, that there would be first a general apostasie under the Antichrist, before Christ his second coming, chap. 2. Thirdly, by exhorting them to several duties of a Christian conversation, and more especially to abandon in their own practice, and suppress in others, the sin of Idleness, to v. 16. of chap. 3. In which and the two following verses, he concludeth the Epistle.

CHAP. I.



He first part of this Chapter containeth the inscription of the Epistle, *v. 1, 2.*

In the second part he propoundeth four grounds of consolation to them under their present sufferings; the first of which, is, his high estimation of them made manifest by his giving thanks to God for them *v. 3.* and his holy boasting of them, and of the graces of God in them, unto other Churches, *v. 4.* A second ground of consolation is taken from this, that their present sufferings did serve as a glass wherein they might foresee the day of judgement coming, and an happy event of that day as to them, *v. 5.* which he proveth from Gods righteous nature, *v. 6. 7.* — A third doth lye in a description of that last day, first, from the glorious manner of Christs coming on it, *v. ---7, 8.* Secondly, from a twofold end of his coming, 1. To destroy eternally wicked reprobates, *v. ---8, 9.* 2. To glorifie the Godly Elect; *v. 10.* The fourth ground of consolation is taken from his prayers to God for them, that the Lord would make them meet for Heaven, by fulfilling all things necessary to salvation in them, *v. 11.* The result whereof should be glory both to Christ and them, *v. 12.*



Ver. 1. **P***Aul, and Silvanus, and Timotheus,*  
*unto the Church of the Thessalonians,*  
*in God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

2. *Grace unto you, and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

These verses contain the inscription of the Epistle in the same words which are already handled, 1 *Thef.* 1. v. 1. It declareth, first, who did write this Epistle. Secondly, to whom it was written, v. 1. and thirdly the usual salutation, v. 2. Besides what is formerly observed upon the place presently cited, *Hence Learn.* 1. As the Lord in deep wisdom and rich mercy hath appointed several means of edification for his Church; So his sent servants are bound to endeavour their edification by one mean when they are not in a capacity to edifie them by another; for, *Paul* being out of a capacity, for the time, to edifie this Church by publick Preaching, doth endeavour to edifie them by his writings. *Paul* — *unto the Church of the Thessalonians.* 2. The written word of God is so contrived that it did not only serve to edifie those unto whom it was first directed, but also doth hold forth copious matter of edification unto all others to whose knowledge it shall come, and should be improved by them accordingly: for, this and the rest of *Pauls* Epistles, which were at first directed to such and such particular Churches and persons, do stand in Scripture as a rule and Canon of faith and manners unto all Christian Churches and persons to the worlds end, *Paul* — *unto the Church of the Thessalonians.* 3. The spirit of  
 God

God which ſpeaketh in Scripture doth not ſo much regard either variety or elegancy of words and ſtile, as the purpoſe expreſſed by thoſe words; and Miniſters who would rather ediſie the Lords people, than beget a good opinion of their own abilities among their hearers, ſhould ſtudy to be acted by the ſame ſpirit, 1 Cor. 2. 4. for, *Paul* uſeth the very ſame form of plain words in the inſcription of this Epistle, which he uſed in the former. *Paul and Silvanus and Timotheus, &c.* 4. Though the Lord hath bound himſelf by abſolute promiſe to grant unto us whatever we aſk in the name of Chriſt, *Joh.* 16. 23. and according to his will, 1 *Joh.* 5. 14. yet the moſt fervent prayers of gracious ſaints, accompanied with all conditions required in prayer, are not alwayes attended with an answer in the ſame very thing which is ſought; and therefore the forementioned promiſes muſt be underſtood with this alternative, God will grant us, either what we pray for, or what he in wiſdom ſeeth more expedient for us, 2 Cor. 12. 8, 9. for, *Paul* prayed fervently that he might ſee their face, 1 *Theſ.* 3. 10. which deſire hath not been granted, as appeareth by his writing to them of new to ſupply the continued want of his preſence. *Paul* —  
to the Church of the Theſſalonians. 5. The Lords people, and eſpecially his publick inſtruments, when marred and croſſed in proſecuting ſome one or other expedient projected by them as tending much advance the Lords work, ought not to fret or ſit down diſcouraged, but to conſider wiſely what other expedient the Lord in providence doth carve out to be followed by them inſtead of that, and  
without

without anxiety are to apply themselves unto it; for, *Paul*, being hindred from coming to them, without more ado doth reverence the Lord in his disappointment, and betaketh himself to writing. *Paul*——unto the Church of the *Thessalonians*.

*Ver. 3. We are bound to thank God alwayes for you, brethren, as it is meet, because that your faith groweth exceedingly, and the charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth.*

The Apostles scope in this second part of the Chapter being to comfort those persecuted *Thessalonians* under their present sad sufferings, & thereby to confirm them the more in those truths for which they did suffer, he propoundeth several grounds of consolation unto them. The first whereof, is, the high esteem which he and his associates had of their graces, which was testified in two things: first, his esteem of them, and of Gods graces in them, was such that he did Judge himself *bound* because of the *meetness*, congruity and equity of the duty in several respects, to make conscience of *giving thanks to God for them*, and that alwayes, in so far as there was alwayes a supply of new matter for this duty furnished unto him from them, which he condescends upon in two particulars, first, their *faith did grow exceedingly*, or overgrow, and grow over-bounds, to wit, not the bounds prescribed by God, but beyond what it was before, yea, and, it may be, the expectation which men had of them. (See how faith doth grow upon *Col. 2.*

v. 7. *doct.* 5.) next, their charity, or, love towards each other did *abound* and also grow, and this in every one of them all without exception, to wit, so far as he in charity could judge, being now at a distance and informed of their estate only by the favourable reports of others, or of some among themselves. (See how charity doth increase and grow, *1 Thes.* 4. v. 10. *doct.* 6.) Learn further hence, 1. As the Lord giveth sometimes way unto the rage and fury of men and Devils to trouble and persecute his dearest Saints for righteousness sake; So it usually falleth out that the more they rage, the less they gain their intent, The more they stain the Churches outward beauty, the more doth her inward beauty, the sanctifying graces of Gods spirit and faith in Jesus Christ, increase and grow: for, so was it with this persecuted and afflicted Church, as the general scope of this part of the Chapter, which is to comfort them under their sufferings, doth imply, and the following verse doth expresse; and yet *Paul* affirmeth here, *their faith did grow exceedingly, and their charity abound.* 2. However the Lord doth usually make his peoples graces to thrive best under a suffering lot, as said is, yet even then they do not want their own discouragements and faintings, arising, partly, from the fear and feeling of their own weakness, *Job* 6. 12. and partly, from the remainders of unmortified corruption within them, which make them incline to be weary of lying so long under such a sad and humbling exercise; and therefore, how thriving soever their case be otherwise, they stand in no small need of consolation

284 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

and encouragement : for, *Paul* supponeth so much while he sets himself to comfort this persecuted and thriving Church, *we are bound to thank God alwayes.* 3. It is a singular comfort and encouragement to a gracious soul, under his saddest cross, to know that the work of grace in him is not only in a vigorous case, but also taken notice of by others and improved as an occasion of thanksgiving unto God from many, *2 Cor. 1. 11.* and it is the duty of Christians, in order to that end, so to take notice of, and improve the growing graces of honest sufferers : for, *Paul*, in order to the comfort and encouragement of this Church, makes them know he took notice of their growth in grace, and did improve it as a ground of thanksgiving : *we are bound to thank God alwayes for you, brethren.* 4. A gracious humble heart doth for the most part so little please himself with his way of discharging duty to God, and especially this sublime and Heavenly duty of thanksgiving and praise, that he dare hardly say he doth discharge it as he ought, but only acknowledge his obligation to discharge it, with the equity and conveniency of it : And so much ought to be acknowledged and avowed, when little further can be attained ; for, *Paul* doth not here say he did give thanks, though doubtless he did so, but only *we are bound to thank God alwayes for you as it is meet.* 5. We ought so to comfort and encourage afflicted Christians, by making them know how much we esteem what good is in them, as that we do not thereby puff them up, and make them conceit of what they have as if they had not received it from God ; for, *Paul* doth

doth thus guard the preſent conſolation, while he giveth God the praiſe of any good was in them and not themſelves. *We are bound to thank God alwayes for you,* ſaith he. 6. As God deſerveth the thanks and praiſe of his peoples graces, and not themſelves; and as the gracious receipts of others do lay on a tye of thankſgiving to God upon us; So we are not alwayes to conceal our conſcience-making of this duty from the knowledge of others, but ought to make it ſometimes known, though not to gain applauſe to our ſelves, *Matth. 6. 5.* yet, as for other ends, ſo, thereby to encourage thoſe whom it concerns, when their caſe doth otherwayes call for it: for, that *Paul* may encourage this afflicted and persecuted Church, he doth make them know that he *did alwayes give thanks to God for them becauſe their faith grew exceedingly.* 7. Where there is a growth of ſaving grace in any, there is not wanting ſufficient ground of thankſgiving to God for them, nor yet of comfort and encouragement unto themſelves, this alone being a ſufficient evidence that all things work together for good unto them according to the promiſe, *Rom. 8. 28.* for, though this Church was otherwayes ſore preſſed with persecution, yet *Paul* looks upon their growth in grace as matter of thankſgiving to God, and of comfort to themſelves; *becauſe that your faith groweth exceedingly,* ſaith he. 8. Then are Chriſtians praiſe-worthy in themſelves, and for matter of praiſe to the Lord and of joy to his faithful ſervants who labour among them, when, according to their time and ſtanding, and the pre

cious means under which they live, their graces are upon the growing hand : for, since *Paul* hath written the former Epistle unto this Church they had grown exceedingly, and gone far beyond what themselves then were, as appears from *1 Thes.* 1. 3. where he only mentioneth their graces simply, without any commendation to them for their growth, but now he shews their faith had grown exceedingly. And therefore is it that he gives thanks to God for them here, and glorieth of them before the Churches *v.* 4. even because, saith he, *your faith groweth exceedingly and your charity aboundeth.* 9. As the saving graces of faith and love admit of degrees, and do not come to their height and perfection at the first ; So they increase and decrease, grow and fade together, in so far as faith, being the cause of love, *Gal.* 5 — 6. and love an evidence of faith, *1 Joh.* 3. 14. the vigor and decay of the one cannot choose but have some answerable influence upon the other : for, *Paul* sheweth they both did grow proportionably and together : *your faith*, saith he, *groweth exceedingly and your charity aboundeth.* 10. It is a sweet ingredient for comfort and encouragement to an afflicted suffering Church, when Satan prevaieth not to make a wedge of their afflicted case, or of any other thing, to rent them asunder neither in opinion, affection or practice : but the more they are heated and persecuted by men, the more do they cleave in love and affection flowing from faith one to another : And it must of necessity prove a most uncomfortable addition to all their sufferings when it is otherwise ;

wayes ; for, *Paul* doth mention their abounding in love towards each other, flowing from faith, as that which might and doubtless did sweeten all their sufferings, and yield them matter of comfort under them, *because*, saith he, *your faith and charity towards each other aboundeth.*

II. Our Judgement of the inward gracious estate of others ought to be swayed and ruled with charity, which though it be not blind in passing judgement contrary to seen and pregnant evidences, *Titus* 3. 16. yet it is not too suspicious, where there is not clear ground, *1 Cor.* 13 — 5. and hopeth the best in things which are uncertain, *1 Cor.* 13 — 7 — for, so did *Paul*, being now at a distance from them, and being informed of their estate by the favourable reports of those who came from them, he doth without any further anxious enquiry judge of them all and every one of them without exception of any as truly gracious and abounding in charity towards all, which he could not have done, except he had in charity construed some known escapes among them to the better. *The charity of every one of you all towards each other aboundeth*, saith he.

Ver. 4. *So that we our selves glory in you in the Churches of God, for your patience and faith in all your persecutions and tribulations that ye endure.*

Here is the second thing, whereby his high esteem of them was testified, which followed upon their forementioned abundant growth. It weighed



so with him that he *himself*, a man of a sober discerning spirit, far from flattery, was constrained to glory of them, that is, to speak with a kind of holy boasting (as the word taken in a good sense doth signifie) to the recommendation of the grace of God wrought in them by Gods blessing upon his Ministry, and to propound them to those other *Churches of God* among whom he gloried of them, for a pattern to be imitated by them. So that his gloriation and boasting was not in the flesh, or in men, which is forbidden, *Phil.* 3. 3. *1 Cor.* 3. 21. but in the Lord; for it was not for things carnal but spiritual, to wit, their faith and patience, the praise whereof he hath first ascribed unto God, *v.* 3. and though some commendation did hereby accrease unto himself, as to the Lords instrument for good to them, *1 Cor.* 9. 1. yet his great design herein is not to hunt after applause unto himself, *Gal.* 1. 10. but to commend the Lord who had wrought by him, *1 Cor.* 15. 10. and to excite others to the imitation of those praise-worthy graces which were eminent in this Church, *2 Cor.* 8. *v.* 1, 2, 3. with 8. Now the matter of his boasting was, as he himself doth next express, first, their *patience* or praise-worthy perseverance under the yoke of duty with the endurance of the cross, for the word in the original implyeth both perseverance and endurance. Next, their *faith*, or the exercise of that grace in all its branches under greatest difficulties, both which graces are commended from the great opposition by which they were assaulted in their exercise, what from multiplied *persecutions*, that is, afflictions from men

for

for righteousneſs ſake, *Matth. 5. 10.* and what from multiplyed *tribulations*, that is, any affliction whatſoever, whether immediately or mediately from God; all which they did with patience and confidence *endure*, the word ſignifieth willingly to endure and ſuffer, *Matth. 17. 17. 1 Cor. 4. 12. Doct. 1.* Though Chriſtians ſhould not be proud of any applauſe or eſteem they have, nor ſeek to have their graces made known for gaining eſteem to themſelves, except it be in ſubſerviency to the praiſe of God; (ſee upon *Gal. 6. v. 4. doct. 5.*) yet they ought to look upon it as an encouraging mercy, when their name is ſavoury for good, and their graces made known among the Lords people, in ſo far as they themſelves are thereby ingaged to walk answerably to their name, *2 Cor. 9. 2.* with 4. and are in better capacity to do good in their ſtation unto thoſe with whom their name is pretious, *2 Cor. 8. 18, 19.* and God doth thereby get the more of praiſe for his goodneſs to them from many, *2 Cor. 1. 11.* and others alſo are incited to glorifie God by their example, *Matth. 5. 16.* For, in order to their encouragement and comfort, he ſhews that their graces were made known by him to other Churches, and they eſteemed of for them accordingly, while he ſaith, *So that we our ſelves glory in you in the Churches of God.* 2. Though we ought to endeavour, ſo far as is poſſible, to have our names ſavoury for good unto all, *1 Pet. 2. 12.* yet thoſe among men, unto whom we ſhould ſtudy to approve our ſelves moſt, and to carry a deſerved commendation from, are the ſober and judicious Godly, who hate diſſimulation

and flattery. And whatever be our esteem with, or commendation from fawning flatterers, or the weak, unsolid, (though otherwise pious) discerners, it can afford but small encouragement and comfort, if those others have bad thoughts of us, or stand by as neutrals : for, the encouragement propounded to them doth stand in this, that *Paul* and his associates, who were more eminently gracious, did think so well of them, *So that we our selves glory in you*, saith he. 3. A Ministers boasting and gloriation as to his flock and charge should not be in their multitude, riches, greatness or civilities towards himself, nor yet simply in their high esteem of him for his abilities and graces, but in the success of his pains among them, and in the saving graces of Gods spirit bestowed upon them by means of his Ministry ; Neither is it unlawful, but sometimes convenient, for a Minister so to glory in his flock, providing his gloriation be qualified as *Pauls* was ; ( see the exposition ) for, *Paul* saith, *we our selves glory in you ——— for your faith and patience*. 4. As it is the duty of the Lords people to speak to the commendation of Gods grace in others ; So they should be ruled by prudence in the discharge of this duty, and not too lavish in their commendations, either by commending men too much above their known worth, or by boasting of them, although their worth deserve it, indifferently unto all, even to those who know not the worth of grace, and to whom the boaster, partly boasted of, and the graces of Gods spirit for which he boasteth, are alike unfavoury. There should be a  
distinct

distinct and prudent choice both of the party in whom, and of the party to whom we boast; for, *Pauls* boasting is of men eminently gracious, as the preceding verse doth shew, and not indifferently before all, but only in the Churches of God. So that, saith he, *we our selves glory in you in the Churches of God.* 5. That persecutions, crosses and tribulations, especially from wicked men, are the ordinary lot of Gods Church and people, and the reasons why it is so, see upon *Gal. 1. v. 13. doct. 6.* In all your persecutions and tribulations which ye endure, saith he. 6. The greatest glory of Christians, and the richest matter of gloriation in them, and of thankfulness to God which can be afforded unto others from them, is not so much in their resisting by force, and breaking the yoke and power of their persecuting enemies, as in their meek and patient endurance of the utmost of their rage and fury, before they cede one hove in the point of truth and duty; for *Paul* did glory in them for their *patience in all their tribulations.* 7. As the grace of patience under sufferings presupposeth faith, and cannot be where faith is nor, (whatever seeming patience a natural man, destitute of faith in Jesus Christ, may have, it is not a saving grace, but either brutish stupidity, *Gen. 49. 15.* or heartless despair, *Gen. 4. 13, 14.* or, at the best, a moral vertue only, *1 Cor. 13. 3.* defective as to the intensive measure of patience, contrary to *Col. 1.* — 11. or as to the extent of patience to all crosses, contrary to *Col. 1.* — 11 — and as to the spiritual grounds and motives from which it should flow, contrary to *Rom. 5. 3.*

compared

compared with 1.) So the more a man doth grow in faith the more he will be assisted and furnished with the grace of patience under crosse dispensations ; and as faith is weakned, so our patience also will decay and languish. For, he joyneth their *patience* with *faith* in all their tribulations. 8. As grace is then most praise-worthy, when, the more it is opposed, the more it groweth ; So it argueth an eminent degree of faith and patience, and such as may indeed be boasted of, and propounded as a pattern for imitation unto others, when variety of tryals and crosse dispensations from God, and of persecutions from men, do not mar, but rather quicken the exercise of those graces : for, their *patience* and *faith*, of which he gloried, was such as did sustain them and make them *endure all their persecutions and tribulations*.

Ver. 5. *Which is a manifest token of the righteous judgement of God, that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which ye also suffer.*

Followeth a second ground of consolation under their present sad sufferings taken from what their afflictions from wicked men and their patience under them, spoken of v. 4. did signifie. They were a *manifest token*, or an infallible argument and demonstration proving convincingly that God shall judge the world righteously at the last day, for by this *righteous judgement* must be meant the last and general judgement, as the following verses make evident. And, first, it is called *righteous*, because though God doth alwayes judge righteously,

righteously, when he judgeth, *Psal.* 51. 4. yet then shall his righteousness in judging be most evident, and all those things which do now obscure it (*Jer.* 12. 1. ) fully removed, *Matth.* 25. 32, &c. Next, their patient suffering is said to be a convincing evidence that this righteous judgement shall come to pass, because supposing that undeniable principle which is clear to the very light of nature, *Rom.* 1. 20. that God is an all-seeing omnipotent and righteous Judge, it must of necessity follow that he seeth what injuries are done unto his people, hath power to punish them, and seeing he doth not punish them now, he will be avenged on them hereafter. Which ground of consolation is further enlarged from the end, or event, of that last judgement unto them, they should be therein accounted, or judicially accepted and declared, worthy, or ( as the word is rendred, *Act.* 26. 20. ) fit and meet to enjoy the Kingdom of God, that is, Heaven and glory, called a Kingdom for reasons hinted upon *Gal.* 5. 21. doct. 9. and, of God; See upon *Eph.* 5. v. 5. And he sheweth that one piece or evidence of their worthiness and meetness to enjoy this Kingdom consisteth in their suffering for it, and for their walking in the way of faith and obedience which leadeth to it; which is not to be so taken as if their sufferings could make them worthy of Heaven by way of merit ( see *Rom.* 8. 18. ) but only they did presuppose faith in Christ, *Phil.* 1. 29. and so did evidence their right to Heaven, seeing faith doth give a right unto it, *Joh.* 3. 16. As also sanctified sufferings through Gods blessing do purge away sin and promote the

the work of sanctification in those who suffer, *Isa.* 27. 9. and so do polish and make them meet for Heaven, holiness being the way which leadeth to it, *Heb.* 12. 14. Besides, the Lord hath bound himself by promise that they who suffer with him shall also reign with him, *2 Tim.* 2. 12. and so their sufferings did make them meet for Heaven as being a qualification of those to whom Heaven is promised. *Doct.* 1. It is the Lords allowance unto believers to look upon the day of general judgement and the approaching of it with cheerfulness and courage, and so as to draw comfort under all their sufferings from the faith of it : yea, and though the remembrance of this day be terrible to men unrenewed, *Act.* 24. 25. yet it is most comfortable unto believers when they are in a good case and temper : As knowing that then all their wrongs shall be righted, *Psal.* 37. 6. the atheistical suggestions of Satan in prejudice of Gods overruling providence wholly refuted, *Mal.* 3. 18. the Bride, the Lambs wife, compleatly and in all her members, glorified, *Rev.* 21. 2, 9. and they themselves fully freed from all sin and misery, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God unto all eternity, *1 Thes.* 4. 17. For, he laboureth to perswade them that this day of general judgement would come, that from the faith of it they might draw their comfort, *which is a manifest token of the righteous judgement of God,* saith he. 2. The most grown and praise-worthy faith and patience are not so perfect, but they are in hazard to be shaken and brangled by continued trouble and tryal, and stand in need to be supported by

by God and underpropped by ſuch conſolations as the Lord hath ſtored up in his word, that they faint not : for, notwithstanding he hath preſently ſhewn how much he had gloried in their faith and patience, yet he ſeeth it neceſſary, for their further ſupport and comfort, to ſhew them that their patient ſuffering was *a manifeſt token of the righteous judgement of God.* 3. As that excellent truth, concerning the day of Gods moſt righteous judgement ; doth hardly, and with great difficulty, get credit, ſome being wholly unwilling, *2 Pet. 3. 3, 4.* and others not able to believe it as they gladly would ; *Mark 9. 24.* So there is no truth or article of our faith whereof more convincing proofs and infallible demonstrations may be had than of this, for not only hath the ſpirit of God frequently and plainly aſſerted it, *Joh. 5. 28, 29.* but alſo every particular injury which the Lords people do ſuffer from men, and is not righted in this life, is an infallible argument and cogent proof that this day ſhall moſt undoubtedly come. So that there are infinite proofs, becauſe there are infinite wrongs of that ſort ; *which, ſaith he, is a manifeſt token of the righteous judgement of God.* 4. The comforts of the Lords people under their ſaddeſt ſufferings from men, are near at hand, if their eyes were not ſometimes ſhut that they cannot ſee them, yea ſo nigh, that every croſs of that kind hath an excellent cordial of ſweeteſt comfort in its boſome, and the greater their croſs is, the ſweeter is the comfort which is brought along with it, and in it : for, he affirmeth that their unjuſt ſufferings, and their patience under



der them, are so many tokens of the righteous judgement of God. 5. The day of general judgement, and the remembrance of it, can prove comfortable only to such as may upon solid grounds expect a favourable sentence on that day from Christ the Judge; for, the comfort propounded doth not lye wholly in this, that the righteous judgement of God shall come, but also that the event of it shall be good as to them; even *that ye may be counted worthy of the Kingdom of God*, saith he. 6. As none shall enjoy the Kingdom of Heaven, but those whom God maketh fit and meet for it, though not by making them to merit Heaven (for it is the gift of God, *Rom. 6. 23.*) yet by working in them all those gracious qualifications, which are required in those, upon whom he hath bound himself by gracious covenant and promise to bestow eternal happiness: *Col. 1. 12.* with *13. 14.* So the main business of the day of Gods righteous judgement, at least that piece of it wherein the comfort of believers doth chiefly lye, shall be in the Lords judicial accepting, and publick declaring that the persecuted Godly (whom wicked men did judge the scum and off-scouring of the world, *1 Cor. 4. 13.*) are worthy, fit and meet to reign with him for ever. Which gracious acceptation of his, though it be really past, *Eph. 1. 6.* and intimated to their own consciences here on earth, *1 Joh. 3. 19.* yet the publick manifestation of it, in the view of Angels, devils and reprobates, is reserved until that day, and shall be then performed; for, he sheweth that the end and event  
of

of the righteous judgement of God, is, that they may be counted judicially accepted, and declared worthy and meet for *the Kingdom of God*. Now he accounteth and declareth none meet for it but those who are made meet. 7. As the Kingdom of Heaven and glory is worthy to be suffered for, and will be so esteemed of by all them who shall one day be counted worthy of it and meet for it ; So such ill will hath Satan that any should enjoy that Kingdom which he himself hath irrecoverably lost, 2 *Pet.* 2. 4. and such is the hatred of wicked men, though not to Heaven it self, yet, to the way of faith and obedience which leadeth to it, that there is none who entreth that way, who may not expect the utmost of Satans and wicked mens malice to pursue them in it, and that mainly because they walk in that way, whatever be those other pretexts which their persecutors may hold out, 2 *Tim.* 2. 9. For, he affirms they did suffer for the Kingdom of God, and makes that an evidence that they shall be accounted meet for it : *for which ye also suffer*, saith he.

Ver. 6. *Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompence tribulation to them that trouble you.*

7. *And to you who are troubled, rest with us —*

He doth here prove that their patient suffering of injuries from men was an infallible proof of the righteous judgement of God, and that the event thereof shall be such to Christian sufferers as he hath presently affirmed ; and that because it is a  
*righteous*

*righteous thing with God*, or, a thing that his most  
 righteous nature did oblige him to, even to recom-  
 pence and repay trouble unto all such as did un-  
 justly persecute and trouble them for righteousness  
 sake, *v. 6.* and to recompence and bestow rest from  
 all trouble and labour to those who are put to trou-  
 ble and hardship by men for love to their duty;  
 and that *with us*, to wit, with the Apostles and  
 others; whereby he doth not only commend this  
 excellent rest unto them, as being a rest with such,  
 but doth also shew them that he did not now speak  
 of a thing uncertain, but what he had the faith of  
 as to his own particular. And whereas he saith  
 that Gods *righteous* nature doth no less bind him  
 to this than to the former, The meaning is not as  
 if this blessed rest had been merited by them, as  
 trouble and torment was by their persecutors,  
*Rom. 6. 23.* but because Christ had merited this  
 rest for them, *Rom. 3. 26.* and God of free grace  
 had obliged himself to bestow this rest upon them,  
*Matth. 5. 11, 12.* and therefore it is a righteous  
 thing with God to recompence it to them, as *right-*  
*eousness* is taken elsewhere for his faithfulness in  
 keeping promise, see *Psal. 143. 1.* *1 John 1. 9.*  
 From all which he doth leave it unto them to ga-  
 ther, that seeing this recompence was not given  
 now, but all things were almost contrary, there  
 could be no surer demonstration of a day coming  
 wherein the Lord in righteousness shall give it to the  
 full, which he doth here intend to prove. *Doct. 1.*  
 Whatever is righteous with God, and judged  
 so by him, shall undoubtedly come to pass, and  
 therefore though for the time truth may fall in the  
 streets,

streets, and equity cannot enter, *Isa. 59. 14.* yet either now or afterwards judgement shall return unto righteousness, and the cause which is accounted righteous with God shall have the upper hand: for, his scope is to prove that there shall be a day of Gods righteous judgement, because it is a righteous thing with God that it should be so even to recompence trouble, &c. 2. It is the ordinary lot of the Lords people, and a thing which the Lord would have them undoubtedly to expect, to meet with an unjust measure, and unrighteous sentence from the judgement-seats of men, who do usually, either through blindness of judgement, *Act. 3. 17.* or perverseness of will, *Zech. 7. 9.* with 11. condemn the innocent and absolve the guilty; for, while he saith that the rendering unto every man his due is *a righteous thing with God*, he secretly implyeth that the doing so much is not often judged righteous by men. 3. The Lord alloweth his persecuted people to comfort themselves under their saddest sufferings from the faith of this, that the Lord shall, either now or afterwards, one time or other, reckon in wrath and strictest justice with their obstinate and Godless persecutors. And therefore the Lords people may and should comfort themselves, and rejoice in the approaching ruine of their enemies, though not as it is their misery, *Job 31. 29.* yet as the necessary result of their ruine is Gods glory, *Psal. 59. 13.* and as it shall be made thereby evident that God hath owned the righteous quarrel for which the Godly suffer, *Psal. 58. 10, 11.* and as their rest from trouble shall necessarily go along with the ruine

of their enemies ; For, in order to their comfort under persecution, he doth mind them of that recompence of trouble which was to come upon their godless persecutors. *Seeing it is a righteous thing*, saith he, *to recompence trouble unto them who trouble you.* 4. Though some, who for the present are most godless persecutors may afterwards turn to God and obtain mercy, *1 Tim. 1. 13.* in which case the stroke of divine justice, due to such, hath lighted upon Christ the surety, *Isa. 53. 5.* Yet as the most part of cruel persecutors do persist impenitent, so the heaviest dint of divine vengeance shall undoubtedly fall on such in the day of Gods most righteous judgement ; for, while he mentioneth only persecutors, here, as those upon whom God is bound in righteousness to execute judgement, he implyeth that many of such shall dye without mercy, and shall be most severely judged at the last day : *to recompence trouble unto them that trouble you*, saith he. 5. The righteous judgement of God may be seen, not only in his causing wrath and vengeance to follow where sin hath gone before ; but also, and mainly, in the nature and kind of those judgements which he doth inflict ; in so far, that, in some respects, they answer and are suitable unto the sin for which they are inflicted, so that wicked men may in their sin foresee their stroke, and in their stroke may read the sin for which they are stricken : *Jude 1. 7.* For, he doth make it *a righteous thing with God*, not only to inflict judgement for sin upon the wicked, but also such judgements as are most suitable to their sin, *event to recompence trouble unto them that trouble you,*

you, saith he. 6. This present time is a time of trouble, and not of rest, unto the people of God. Their trouble is now, what from men, *Mar. 10. 22.* what from devils, *Eph. 6. 12.* what from a body of sin within them, *Rom. 7. 24.* what from their own consciences, which, sometimes with ground, *Psal. 32. 3.* and sometime without ground, *Psal. 88. 3.* do vex and trouble them, and what from God himself, *Job 6. 4.* who doth not see a constant rest here to be fitting for them, *Psal. 55. 19.* But their rest in all these respects shall be afterwards: For, while he saith, *It is a righteous thing with God* ——— to give the Godly who are troubled rest in the day of his righteous judgement, he doth tacitly imply that they have not rest here. 7. The wisdom of God hath so contrived the way of the elects salvation, as not only mercy in God, but also his provoked justice, is satisfied with it, yea and engaged for it; So far will justice be from standing in opposition to it; For, he saith, *It is a righteous thing with God to recompence* ——— rest unto you who are troubled. 8. It addeth much to the excellency of that rest which remaineth unto the people of God, that it shall not be enjoyed by one alone, or some few only, but all the Saints, from the most eminent unto the meanest, shall be compartners in it, in so far as, though the glory of all shall be derived immediately from God, *1 Cor. 15 — 28.* yet the presence of all the glorified Saints shall make their glory the more desirable, and the joynt concurrence of them all in one and the same song of praise to God and the Lamb, *Rev. 7. 9, 10.* shall doubtless, by reason of the

concord and harmony flowing from it, make their song the sweeter; for, he commendeth this excellent rest from this, that the Apostles, Prophets, and such eminent Saints as they should share with them, and they with those in that rest: *and to you who are troubled rest with us*, saith he.

Ver. ——— 7. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from Heaven with his mighty Angels.*  
 8. *In flaming fire,* ———

The Apostle doth here enter a second ground of consolation, or rather enlarge and clear the former, while he condescendeth upon the day wherein the forementioned retribution shall be made, to wit, the day appointed for the last judgement; and thence doth take occasion, for the greater comfort of the persecuted Godly and terrour of their Godless persecutors, to describe that day, first, from the glorious manner of Christs coming to judgement on it, set forth in three expressions: first, he shall *be revealed from Heaven*, his glorious humane nature, for the time contained and hid from us in the Heaven, *Act. 3. 21.* shall then appear to our eyes and senses, *Rev. 1. 7.* and not only appear, but also locally descend unto the aire, *1 Thes. 4. 16.* from the highest Heavens to which he once ascended, *Eph. 4. 10.* Secondly, He shall come accompanied with a glorious train and retinue of a *thousand times ten thousands* (*Jude v. 14.*) of the blessed *Angels*, here called *mighty*, to shew that they shall be fitted for their work wherein they will be then employed, and, more particularly, to  
 gather

gather the elect, *Matth.* 24. 31. and to execute his terrible sentence against the reprobate, *Matth.* 13. 41. This is contained v. — 7. Thirdly, he shall come in flaming fire, by which the Heavens and earth which now are, shall be dissolved and burnt up, *2 Pet.* 3. 10, 12. and damned reprobates shall be tormented, *Heb.* 10. 27. *Doct.* 1. Though the souls of believers are at death made perfect in holiness, *Heb.* 12 — 23. yet their happiness is not then compleat, nor before the end of time in the day of Gods righteous judgement; in so far as their bodies shall lye dissolved in the grave until then, *Job* 19. 26, 27. and then being raised in glory they shall be united unto their souls, *Job.* 5. 28, 29. and the whole man perfectly and unchangeably blessed, *1 Thes.* 4. 17, 18. The Lord having so provided, that neither our fore-runners without us, nor we without our after-comers, shall be compleatly glorified; but the head-stone of glory being put upon all at once, the glorifying of Christ in them, and of them in Christ, may be the more solemn and glorious; for, he sheweth that the recompence of rest will be when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed; &c. and not until then. 2. It may contribute not a little to the comfort and encouragement of Christian sufferers, and the terrour of their Godless Persecutors, to know not only that a day of general Judgement shall be, but also that in that day the Lord Jesus shall be Judge; even he, for whom the Godly suffered, *Act.* 5. 41. who gave himself to death that he might save them, *Ephes.* 5. 25, 26, 27. who is their head, *Ephes.* 1. 22. their husband,



304 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

2 Cor. 11. 2. their dearest friend, Cant. 5. 16. and therefore he cannot choose but pass a favourable sentence on them; and it is he whom wicked men despised, Isa. 53. 3. whose gracious offers they rejected, Matth. 23. 37. whose servants, friends and followers they set at nought and persecuted, Gal. 4. 29. and therefore there can be none whose terrible sentence they have more reason to fear than his: for, in order to the main scope, which is to comfort the persecuted Godly, and, as a mean subservient thereto, to terrifie their Godless Persecutors, he sheweth that Christ shall be the Judge. *When the Lord Jesus shall be revealed*, &c. saith he. 3. Though there be much revealed, preached and made known of Christ, 2 Tim. 4. 17. yet he remaineth obscure and hid. The wicked do not know him at all, as not believing the truth of what they hear concerning him, Isa. 53. 1. until they see it to their own unspeakable sorrow and grief, Rev. 1. 7. yea and even the Godly do but know in part, 1 Cor. 13. 9. and cannot comprehend, by faith and at a distance, the hundredth part of that excellency and beautiful glory which they shall find him adorned with when they shall see him face to face, 1 Cor. 13. 12. Besides that his bodily presence is, for the time, kept up from their eyes, the curtain of the highest Heavens being interposed betwixt them and that glorious sight. For, while he saith, *the Lord Jesus shall be then revealed*, it is implied that until then he is in a manner hid. 4. It may also contribute much to the comfort of the Godly, and terrour of the wicked,

wicked, that Jeſus Chriſt, the Judge, ſhall come, not in a ſtate of humiliation, as he did at the firſt, when his divine glory was ſo much covered over with the vail of humane (though ſinleſs, *Heb.* 4. 15.) infirmities, that a natural eye could ſee no beauty in him for which it ſhould either deſire him or fear him; *Iſa.* 53. 2. But he ſhall come as an exalted King, accompanied with a glorious train of mighty Angels to execute what ſentence ſhall be paſſed; from whom as the Godly can expect nothing but favourable dealing, as from their deareſt friends, their fellow ſervants, *Rev.* 22. 9. and thoſe who are employed by Chriſt the Judge to bring about the good of the Elect, and, in a manner, to ſerve them while they are here on earth, *Heb.* 1. 14. So the wicked can expect nothing but the certain and ſummary execution of their dreadful ſentence from thoſe bleſſed creatures, deſigned executioners for that very thing, whom the damned reprobates cannot reſiſt, they are ſo mighty and ſtrong, *Pſal.* 103. 20. nor flee from, they are ſo ſwift, *Iſa.* 6. 2. nor move with flattery and requests, they are ſo true unto their truſt; *Pſal.* 103. 21. For, in order to the comfort of the one and terrour of the other, he ſheweth how Chriſt ſhall come accompanied with a glorious train of mighty Angels. 5. Even thoſe things which are in themſelves moſt terrible, and ſhall be ſo to Godleſs reprobates at Chriſts ſecond coming, have in them matter of comfort and encouragement unto the Godly; and, in particular, thoſe very flames which ſhall put thoſe Heavens and Earth, which now are, all in a blaze,

and, consequently, shall prove a most terrible and sadning sight unto the wicked, when all their delightfome Idols are burnt up and destroyed before their eyes, and that flame of fiery wrath then kindled shall devour themselves unto all eternity; even those terrible flames shall be a comfortable sight unto the Godly, yea and the fore-thoughts of them may and should yield comfort to them under their present trouble, as knowing that the more terrible that judgement is, which doth remain for their adversaries, the more are they both in their persons and cause, owned by the Lord, for clearing whereof he will give such evident proofs of his wrath against all who will not favour them as he doth; for, in order to their comfort, he sheweth that *Jesus the Lord shall be revealed in — flaming fire,*

*Ver. — 8. Taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

He describeth the day of Judgement, secondly, from a twofold end of Christs coming on it, and joyntly cleareth that two-fold retribution spoken of v. 6, 7 ——— The first end relateth to the wicked; he shall come to take vengeance on them, that is, to proceed against them, as a wrathful judge, with all extremity, and without any mixture of mercy, for *vengeance* signifieth a wrathful retribution of evil; and those upon whom he shall take vengeance are of two sorts, 1. All those, whether Pagans or profest Christians, *who know not God*, and are ignorant of what may, and is necessary

In order to salvation to be known of him. 2. All those among Christians, who though they have some knowledge of Gospel-truths, yet, do not yield that subjection and obedience thereunto, which is enjoined by it; The greatness of which sin of disobedience to the Gospel is hinted at in this, that the Gospel is here called *the Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ*, that is, a doctrine which he hath revealed, and which treateth of him, and the way of acquiring a right unto him, and to life eternal through him. So that to slight and disobey the Gospel is to slight Jesus Christ, with all the good things purchased by him. *Doct. 1.* Men, by living in their ignorance of God and disobedience to the Gospel, do not only wrong themselves and are indeed greatest enemies to their own mercies, but do also injure the Lord, and what in them lieth do put an affront upon him, as if the knowledge of God were not worth the pains, and as if Christ had put himself to unnecessary travel for purchasing life and salvation to sinners, the offer whereof they refused to accept and embrace; for, while he saith, *the Lord Christ will take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the Gospel*, it is implied that there is a wrong and injury offered to God in their ignorance and disobedience, for which he will avenge himself upon them. 2. As Gods vindictive justice shall seize upon others besides bloody persecutors, in the great day, even upon all who know not God and obey not the Gospel; So it shall prove no comfort at all unto damned reprobates that an innumerable multitude shall be damned with them, but rather augment their

their torment and horroure; for, he sheweth that the Lord will take vengeance, not only upon avowed persecutors, of whom he spoke before, *v. 6.* but also upon all that *know not God, and obey not the Gospel*, and this to increase terrour to those cruel persecutors, who shall much less escape. 3. Though there be a great difference betwixt Law and Gospel, the former only commanding, the latter also holding forth promised furniture and strength for enabling us to obey, the former admitting of no less than perfect obedience, *Gal. 3. 10.* and personal satisfaction for our disobedience, *Gen. 2. 17.* the latter accepting sincerity instead of perfection, *Mat. 23. 23.* and satisfaction by a cautioner instead of our own, *2 Cor. 5. 21.* Yet there is no such difference betwixt them as if the Law only did command and the Gospel only promise. No, The Gospel hath its own commands as well as the Law, yea commandeth the same things which the Law commandeth, with respect had to the forementioned differences and others of that kind; for, while he speaketh of them *that obey not the Gospel*, it is implied that the Gospel doth command and enjoyn. 4. The Lords will is not the only cause of the reprobates condemnation, he condemneth none but for their sin, and those whose ignorance and disobedience have first procured their condemnation; so that the very consciences of most Godless reprobates shall be made to subscribe to their own condemnation as most equitable and just: for, he pointeth at their ignorance and disobedience as causes of their condemnation, while he saith, *the Lord Christ will take vengeance on them who know not God and obey*

not the Gospel. 5. Suppose a man might know very much, yea and obey the Law unto the utmost of what his abilities can reach, yet if he do not obey the Gospel, and, more especially, that great command of the Gospel to believe and accept an offered Saviour, 1 Job. 3. 23. he cannot be saved, The least sin which ever he committed will be, in that case, of it self sufficient to condemn him; for, so much is clear, while it is said, *Christ will take vengeance on them who obey not the Gospel*, whatever be their knowledge, obedience or disobedience otherways.

Ver. 9. *Who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of his power.*

He doth here set forth the terrour of that vengeance which shall be then inflicted upon the ignorant and disobedient, first, from the kind of it, it shall not be an ordinary loss, but a *destruction* both of soul and body, from which there shall be no escaping, 1 *Thes.* 5. — 3. and yet not an utter abolishing of their nature and being, as the destruction of beasts is, but of their well-being and joy, as the destruction of the fallen Angels was, *Jude* v. 6, 7. and therefore it is set forth, next, from the continuance of it. It shall be *eternal*. The word signifieth properly a thing alwayes existing and never ending. They shall still be dying an immortal death and yet never dead. 3. From the great loss which they shall sustain by this destruction. They shall never behold the *Lords* gracious presence but be banished from it unto all eternity :

eternity : or rather the efficient cause or mean of this destruction is hereby pointed at, The very presence of Christ the Judge shall torment them, and his infinite *glorious power* drive them away, as unworthy to stand in his sight, to the place of torment prepared for them, and shall perpetuate their torment by upholding them in their being under it.

*Doct. 1.* Though there be degrees of torment among the damned in Hell, *Matth. 11. 22.* yet the pain and torment of all shall agree in those ; The total destruction of their well-being and joy, the eternity of that destruction, and an utter estrangement from any mixture of comfort, and from Gods presence the fountain from whence comfort doth flow ; for, he saith, that, not only avowed persecutors, but all the ignorant and disobedient, *shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.* 2. When the ransom for sin payed by Christ is not embraced, there is no remedy but the sinner himself must undergoe the stroke of divine justice for those sins which he hath committed ; for, those who obey not the Gospel by accepting an offered ransome *shall be punished with everlasting destruction.* 3. As divine justice will never cease to pursue the damned sinner until compleat satisfaction be given for all his sins ; So the wrong done against an infinite God by sin is such, that damned sinners, notwithstanding all the torture and torment both in soul and body that they can endure, shall never be able unto all eternity to satisfie for it : for, saith he, *they shall be punished with everlasting destruction,* Their debt will never be payed, and they shall not  
come

come out of prison until they pay the uttermost farthing, *Matth. 5. 26. Doct. 4.* Though the consciences of Godless reprobates are now, for the most part, dead and seared, *Eph. 4. 19.* yet when Christ the Judge shall come to reckon with them, their consciences shall be so vigorous, quick and lively, that being convicted and condemned by their own consciences already, they shall not endure to behold the presence of Christ the Judge; for, the very presence of Christ the Judge shall torment them, which could not be, if their own consciences did not convince them and powerfully check them for their many by-past injuries done to him. *They shall be punished from the presence of the Lord,* saith he. 5. Though the sentence pronounced against wicked men by their own consciences now is not presently executed, and so the less feared by them, *Eccles. 8. 11.* yet no sooner shall they pass sentence in the great day, or rather second the sentence which will be passed against them by Christ the Judge, but presently and without delay the glorious power of their Judge, by the Ministry of his mighty Angels, will cause the sentence quickly and without the least reprove be put in execution; so that in all probability there shall be no long process, but a quick and suddain dispatch: for, no sooner shall Christs presence, meeting with their self-condemning consciences, begin to torment them, but as soon his glorious power shall be employed to accomplish and continue their torment. *They shall be punished ——— from the presence of the Lord and from his glorious power,* to wit, joyntly and without intermission.



312 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

Ver. 10. *When he shall come to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.*

Here is the second end of Christs coming, and it relateth to the Godly, called here, *1. Saints*, strictly taken for those who are inherently holy, and real students of, and proficient in that sanctification which is described upon *1 Thes. 4. 3.* next, *believers*, who are endued with the grace of saving faith, described *1 Thes. 1. 3.* and *all such believers*, and no doubt all such Saints also, are to share in the end of Christs coming here mentioned, which is *to be glorified in them*, that is, to put such a glory upon them (both in soul, *Matth. 22. 30.* and body, *Phil. 3. 21.*) as he himself shall be thereby glorified: not only shall the glorified Saints themselves give glory to him, but the glory of his mercy, power, goodness and other attributes shall, in their glory, be made manifest unto all the world, upon occasion whereof the glorified Angels also shall glorifie him. The Apostle adds that Christ the Judge shall also be *admired in them*, that is, shall put such glory on them as never was expected, neither by themselves or others, *Isa. 64. 4.* and therefore it shall be admired by all beholders, and the mercy, power and grace of Christ, the bestower, shall be admired and wondered at much more. Only the Apostle having first, as it were at the by and in a parenthesis, applied this general ground of consolation to them in particular, by giving a reason for his so doing, to wit, *because they had believed* and given credit unto  
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the doctrine of the Gospel, to the truth whereof he and his associates had given testimony, he doth, in the end of the verse again repeat the time when this shall be, to wit, in that day of Christs second coming, and not until then, hereby to put a stop to their precipitancy in hastening too much after it.

*Doct. 1.* Jesus Christ the Judge shall not be so much transported with rage and fury against the wicked, in the day of general judgement, as to make him forget his tender mercies unto the Godly; he knoweth how to make the same day the greatest for terrour unto his foes, and yet the greatest for Joy unto his friends; for, *Paul* sheweth that he shall take vengeance upon the one, and be glorified in the other, both in one day; *when he shall come to be glorified in his saints.* Yea, 2. The great errand of Christs coming to general Judgement is not so much to render vengeance unto the wicked, as to glorifie and save the Godly, the former being in some respect but as a mean to set forth the glory and solemnity of the latter, *Rom. 9. 22, 23.* for looking narrowly to the Text, we find that Christ doth take vengeance as it were but in the by, when he shall come, as it were of purpose, to put glory on his people. *Taking vengeance on them that know not God,* saith he, v. 8. *when he shall come to be glorified in his Saints.* 3. The rest remaining to the now afflicted and troubled people of God is a glorious rest, and therefore not a total cessation from all action and duty, as lifeless stones, (that rest should have no glory in it,) but from the sin, infirmities and misery with which they are encompassed and attended now in the way of duty, and from all such

### 314. *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

such duty as implyeth any want or imperfection in the performer; otherwise their rest were not completely glorious; for, *Paul* exposing and clearing the test which was promised, *v. 7.* saith, *he shall come to be glorified in his saints.* 4. Though the glory of Christ the Judge will be set forth, to the admiration of all beholders, in the pouring forth of his wrath and vengeance upon Godless reprobates, his proud and obstinate enemies; yet his glory will be incomparably more and more admired in his putting glory upon the Elect, in so far as the reprobate shall receive but what they deserve, but as for the Elect, besides the wonderful change which shall be wrought in them, the glory put upon them shall be without, yea and contrary to their deserving; for, *Paul* saith, *he shall come to be glorified and admired in his saints*, as if his glory to be had in judging reprobates were no glory being compared with that. 5. There is such a necessary connexion betwixt the glory of Christ, and the glory wherewith the Elect shall be glorified in Heaven, that the former is the result of the latter. Christ the head is glorified in that glory which he himself hath procured for, *2 Tim. 1. 10.* and shall bestow upon his members, *2 Tim. 4. 8.* and therefore we neither need nor should separate Gods glory from our own salvation, but are to seek the latter jointly with, and in subordination to the former; for, *Paul* sheweth that Christ shall be glorified in their glory. *When he shall come to be glorified in his saints.* 6. Though there be much foretold in Scripture of the glory which shall be put upon the Lords people in the last day, *1 Job. 3. 2.*  
yet

yet that which is revealed to that purpose is so little believed, *Mark 9. 24.* and cometh so far short of that height of glory wherewith they shall be then adorned and crowned, that Heaven and happiness shall be a far other thing than ever entered in the heart, not only of natural men, but also of the Godly themselves, to think upon : for, therefore the first sight of it shall strike them with admiration, as at a thing beyond their expectation and hope, *he shall come to be admired*, saith he. 7. As Heaven and glory shall be enjoyed only by believers and Saints ; So all those are Saints who are believers, and all are believers who are saints ; there being an inseparable connexion betwixt saving faith and inherent holiness, as betwixt a necessary cause and the effect which floweth from it : for, he putteth the saints and them that believe the one for the other, and sheweth that glory is the portion of such only ; *to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* 8. Though there be degrees of glory in Heaven, *Dan. 12. 3.* yet the meanest believer shall enjoy so much, as the most enlarged heart cannot once imagine or comprehend while we are here ; for, *Paul* saith, *he will be admired in all them that believe*, even the meanest believer not excepted. 9. Our choicest comforts, while we are here on earth, consist in those things which we have not in hand, but shall enjoy hereafter ; and therefore the more we exercise our faith and patience, our comforts will prove the more satisfying and lively : for, he shews that the great and good things, which are here spoken of in order to their comfort, shall

316 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

not be performed before the last day, *to be admired*, saith he, *in all them that believe*—— *in that day.* 10. We are not bound to believe any other doctrine, as necessary to salvation, but that whereof it can be made out convincingly that the Apostles and other penmen of holy Scripture, directed infallibly by the spirit, have given testimony unto; for, saith he, *our testimony was believed among you.* 11. As it is the duty of Christs Ministers to make application of general promises unto the particular case of the Lords people to whom they are sent; So they should carefully guard lest they apply those promises unto any, but such as are so qualified as the promise doth require; otherwise, they speak peace to whom the Lord doth not speak peace; for, the Apostle applyeth the general comfort unto them in particular, having found them endued with faith, that necessary qualification which is required in the person to whom the promise doth belong, *because our testimony was believed among you*, saith he.

*Ver. 11. Wherefore also we pray alwayes for you, that our God would count you worthy of this calling, and fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power.*

In this and the following verse is contained a fourth ground of consolation for them under their present sufferings, the summe whereof is, that he and his associates did earnestly pray to God on their behalf, where ( besides the act of *praying*, and *praying* for them *alwayes*, of which, see upon

*1 Thes.*

1 Theſ. 5. 17.) there is, firſt, the occaſion of their prayer pointed at in the word *wherefore*, or, for this cauſe, which relateth to the foregoing purpoſe, to wit, becauſe Chriſt was to come to be glorified in believers, and becauſe they in particular were believers, therefore he and his associates did pray for them. Next, there are the things prayed for; firſt, *That God*, whom he appropriates to himſelf as his God by Covenant, *would count them worthy*, or, judge them fit and meet (ſee upon v. 5.) *for this calling*, that is, to enjoy that glory unto which they are called; for they were called already, and therefore *calling* here muſt not be taken for Gods act in calling them, but for that unto which they were called, even the Kingdom of God, ſpoken of v. 5. Next, *That*, in order to this, God would *fulfil*, or fully perform and accompliſh, *his good pleaſure* concerning them, that is, his eternal purpoſe of election, called uſually by the name of *good pleaſure*, Ephes. 1. 5, 9. and *all his good pleaſure*, that is, all things which he had purpoſed in that decree to bring about for them, even ſalvation and all things pre-required to it. And it is called the good pleaſure of *his goodneſs*, to ſhew that nothing but his own goodneſs, and propenſeneſs to communicate good from himſelf to others, was the cauſe and motive of that decree. See Eph. 1. v. 4. doct. 7. Thirdly, *That* the Lord by his own omnipotent power would fulfil, and, by fulfilling, preſerve, actuate, increaſe, and fortifie the *work of faith* in them, or, the grace of ſaving faith with all its gracious effects, the ſaving graces of Gods Spirit. Doct. 1: As it

is our duty, in the constant course of our prayers to God, to mind the case of others, and especially of those who suffer for truth, because their temptations to fall are strong, 2 *Tim.* 4. 6, 10, 14, 15. and the glory of God and edification of the Church are in a singular manner concerned in their standing, 2 *Tim.* 2. 10. So it is a choice ground for comfort and encouragement unto suffering Christians, to know they have the prayers and best wishes of those who are dear to God, sent up to the throne of grace daily for them. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much; *Jam.* 5. ——— 16. for, *Paul* did pray alwayes for those suffering *Thessalonians*, and doth let them know so much for their encouragement, *wherefore also we pray alwayes for you.* 2. As it is the duty of Pastors to pray to God for the Lords people, as well as it is to preach unto them; So the more a people do thrive in grace by a Ministers pains, and the more ground of confidence is afforded to him by their carriage that it shall be eternally well with them, the more will his encouragement be, and his engagements the deeper, to pray to God for them: A stubborn and graceless people do prove a dead and heartless weight for a Minister to stand under, and to lift at before the Lord: for, *Paul* did alwayes pray for this people, and was encouraged thereto from their growth in grace, formerly mentioned, and more especially from the evidence he had of their eternal well-being, in their believing his testimony mentioned *v.* ——— 10. and related unto here in the causal particle *wherefore.* *Wherefore also we pray alwayes*

*wayes for you.* 3. It is the duty of those who have gotten their interest in God made clear, to improve their interest in him and familiarity with him for the behove, not of themselves alone, but of others also. This being the only way to recompence the tender bowels of others to them, who employed their power with God for their behove, when possibly they themselves were strangers to him: for, *Paul* improveth his interest in God for them, while, in praying to God on their behalf, he calleth him *his God* — *that our God*, saith he, *would count you worthy.* 4. As none are worthy, fit, or meet, for Heaven, but those whom the Lord hath drawn out of nature to the state of grace in their effectual calling, seeing no unclean thing can enter there; *Rev. 21. 27.* So there is nothing in us, either before or after our effectual calling, which makes us worthy of Heaven, or meet for it by way of merit, but all our fitness and worth of that kind doth come from Gods gracious acceptance, his vouchsafing and accounting of us as such; for if we were worthy of Heaven, by our own merit, to what end doth he pray to God that he *would count them worthy* of it? and he expresseth Heaven by the name of *calling*, to shew that none but called ones are worthy of it, and fit for it. 5. As none shall be accounted and declared worthy in the last day to enter the joyes of Heaven, but those whom God by his eternal decree, and good pleasure hath appointed for it; So the Lord in that his eternal decree hath not appointed Heaven for any, but those whom he hath appointed also in the same decree to make meet for it: for, the connexion of



the two first petitions teacheth, both that Gods good pleasure and decree is anterior to their being accounted worthy, and that Gods good pleasure is fulfilled and executed in Gods counting them meet and worthy, and consequently in his making them so. *And fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness.* 6. As this eternal decree of election is extended unto more things than one, even to the salvation of the elect, and all the means tending to it; So it is in all respects fully free, and had its rise not from any foreseen goodness in us, but from the meer good will and goodness of God; for, therefore doth he call it *all the good pleasure of his goodness.* 7. As God doth not accomplish all the good pleasure of his goodness unto the elect at once, but by degrees and measures until it be fully accomplished in glory; *Matth. 25. 34.* So though no endeavours of ours could have any influence on God for moving him to enact such a gracious decree in our favours, *Rom. 9. 11.* yet they may promote the execution of it; And, especially, fervent prayer is a mean appointed by God for furthering this decree to its full accomplishment: for, the Apostle, by praying unto God that *he would fulfil all the good pleasure of his goodness,* doth intimate the usefulness of prayer in order to that end. 8. As it is the grace of faith, with all its gracious effects, which in Gods account doth fit a man for Heaven; So faith, and all the graces of Gods spirit flowing from it, were resolved on by God in that eternal decree of election to be bestowed upon the elect. And therefore foreseen faith did no wayes move the Lord to elect any, or one more than another;

ther; for, the Apostle, condescending upon the mean how they may be accounted, and consequently made, worthy by God, intreateth him to fulfil the work of faith in them, and maketh this a piece of Gods good pleasure of his goodness towards them, and fulfil — *the work of faith*, saith he. 9. As the grace of faith admits of degrees, and every degree of faith is Gods work; So the carrying on of the work of faith, especially in suffering times, from one degree to another, is a task of such difficulty, and meeteth with such opposition from men, from devils, from within a mans self, *Luke 22. 31, 32.* that it is not only Gods work, but his wonderful work, a work which calleth for omnipotent power, to the working of it: for, he prayeth that *God may fulfil*, or carry on by degrees towards perfection, *the work of faith with power.*

Ver. 12. *That the name of our Lord Jesus Christ may be glorified in you, and ye in him, according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Here is a third thing in this prayer, the end proposed to be brought about by it, or by the good things sought after in it, to wit, that *Christs name*, or himself with all his glorious attributes, *might be glorified in them*, that is, acknowledged and set forth as praise-worthy and glorious by them, both in word and work; and that not only in this life, but also, and mainly, in that which is to come, see *v. 10.* and *that they might be glorified in him*, that is, the glory put upon him by them might reflect

322 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

upon themselves again, and so the more they glorified him, they might the more be glorified by him. But lest they might take matter of boasting hence, as if their glorifying of Christ did merit glory from him to them, he ascribeth all, even that glory of theirs, which had its rise from their glorifying him, not to any merit of theirs, but to *Gods free grace and favour in Christ.* *Dost. 1.* A Christians great design and chief end, which he ought to propose unto himself in all his actions, is the glory of God in Christ, and that his praiseworthy attributes of mercy, love, wisdom, justice, &c. as they are glorious in themselves, so they may be acknowledged for such by us, and by others also, so far as in us lyeth; for, the great end of *Pauls* prayers, and that which he would have them propose to themselves in all their actions, is, *that the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified in them.* 2. As the more we set our selves to glorifie Christ, the more of glory will thereby accrease unto our selves; So we are neither to expect that Christ will glorifie us, but in and by our glorifying him, nor yet to account that any true glory or credit to us, but what resulteth from our putting of glory one way or other upon him: for, he maketh Christs glorifying us the result of our glorifying him, *That the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and ye in him.* 3. Grace is the only way to glory, and the glorifying of Christ in us, and of us in him, is the necessary result of Christs carrying on the work of grace in us according to the good pleasure of his goodness towards perfection. And whatever we be otherwayes, if this  
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be wanting, we are dishonourable to Christ, and acquire nothing but shame and disgrace unto our selves; for, he maketh Gods fulfilling the good pleasure of his goodness in the work of faith, the mean both of Christs glory and theirs, *That the name of the Lord Jesus may be glorified, &c.* 4. That any thing in us doth glorifie Christ, or that any glory doth accrease unto us by our glorifying him, is not to be imputed to the worth or merit of our works, in the best whereof, if the Lord should straitly mark iniquity, there would be found matter of dishonour unto God and of shame unto our selves, *Isa. 64. 6.* but it floweth wholly from Gods free grace and favour, which covereth the imperfection of our work, *Eph. 4. — 32.* and accepteth of what is right in it as service to himself, *Eph. 1. 6.* For, so much doth he teach, while he saith, *according to the grace of our God.* 5. That Jesus Christ is true God appeareth from this, that not only the title of true God may be looked upon here as ascribed unto him, see *Joh. 5. 20.* but also that from his grace and favour all our glory here and hereafter doth flow, and that he is the absolute Lord and dispenser of it; *according to the grace of our God, and the Lord Jesus Christ.*

## CHAP. II.



**I**N the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle doth exhort them to guard against a fabulous error, which did spread among them concerning Christs second coming, as if it had been to fall out in that present age : which exhortation is, first, seriously and at large propounded, *v. 1, 2.* next, briefly repeated, *v. 3.* —

In the second part, he doth refute the forementioned error, and foretelleth a general apostasie under the Antichrist. Which prophesie consists of six branches. In the first he foretelleth that the Antichrist shall be revealed, and bring this apostasie to an head, *v. — 3 —* In the next, the Antichrist is described, 1. From his nature, 2. From two of his titles, *v. — 3.* Thirdly, from two of his properties, his opposition to Christ, and arrogance, both in relation to lawful Magistrates, and to God himself, and Fourthly, from the greatness of his power, and the place where he shall exercise it, he shall sit in the Temple of God, *v. 4.* which doctrine he sheweth was no new invention of his own, *v. 5.* In the third branch of the Prophesie he sheweth that Antichrist was not yet revealed, because of a stop and impediment in the way of his rising, *v. 6.* which should keep him still at under until its removal, *v. 7.* after which he would discover himself, *v. 8 —* In the fourth branch he fore-

foretelleth Antichrists ruine, *v* — 8. In the fifth he mentions the means and helps of his advancement, to wit, 1. Satans assistance, 2. A faculty of working lying Miracles, *v*, 9. and 3. Deceitful false doctrines, *v*, 10 — In the sixth he sets forth his succels and describeth his subjects, first, from their eternal state, they perish, 2. From the cause of their perishing, to wit, their rejecting of truth, *v*, 10. and their believing grossest untruths, the Lord having given them up to the power of error, *v*, 11. Thirdly, from the judgement following upon both the former sins, *v*, 12.

In the third part he confirms and comforts them against the power and terrour of this apostasie; first, from the certainty of their perseverance and salvation grounded upon their election, *v*, 13. which he cleareth from their effectual calling, *v*, 14. next, by exhorting them to constancy in the doctrine received, *v*, 15. Lastly, by praying to God for them, that he would comfort and establish them, *v*, 16, 17.

Ver. 1. **N**ow we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto him.

The Apostle being to establish these *Thessalonians* in the truths against a spreading error concerning the time of Christ second coming (which is expressed *v* — 2.) doth, first, in order to that end, beseech them lovingly and meekly as brethren. 2. He enforceth the exhortation, or rather the dissuasive, with a kind of religious adjuration by

by *Christs* second coming (about which the present error was) and by their *gathering together unto him*, to wit, at the last day, when all the elect shall be fully gathered from the four winds, *Mat. 24. 31.* and caught up to meet the Lord in the air, *1 Thes. 4. 17.* So that he doth in effect obtest them, that as they would have comfort at *Christs* second coming, and partake of that glory, which the elect being gathered together shall receive from him then, *1 Thes. 4* — *17.* so they would obey the present exhortation, and keep themselves at a distance from the following error. *Doct. 1.* The spirit of error is so far from being banished and put to silence by the Churches afflictions and weighty sufferings, that it sometimes takes occasion from those to rage the more among a people, who being wearied with the cross, have oft an open ear to receive whatsoever it is, whether truth or error, which promisethest most of present ease, and of a speedy delivery from their present strait: for, though this Church was presently under a suffering lot, *chap. 1. 4.* yet this error, which did maintain that Christ was presently to come and put an end to trouble at the last day of judgement, did spread fast among them, hence *Paul* doth seriously exhort them to guard against it. *Now we beseech you, brethren.* *2.* The Ministers of Christ ought so to propound the sweet and ravishing consolations of the Gospel to an afflicted people, as they do not omit to press such duties on them as their afflicted state calleth for, or to tax them for yielding in the least to such tentations as Satan takes advantage from their affliction to assault them with; and that because

because untenderness of this kind doth hinder the most sweet and powerful consolations of the Gospel to work and take effect, *Jer.* 42. 10, 11. with 44. 15, &c. for, *Paul*, having comforted this afflicted Church, *chap.* 1. doth now exhort them to duty, and indirectly tax them for their being so soon taken with the present plausible error. *Now we beseech you brethren.* 3. The Minister of Christ, as he ought to entertain love betwixt him and the people of his charge, and for that end to deal affectionately with them at all times : So chiefly when he hath to do with those who are either tainted, or in hazard to be tainted, with error, especially so long as they are not incorrigible in their error ; and that because a spirit of pride doth usually accompany a spirit of error, so that the person tainted with it can hardly endure to be contradicted, *Gal.* 4. 16. if he be not convinced that he who contradicts his errors, doth love his person, and dealeth affectionately with him : for, therefore, while *Paul* is about to meddle with their error, he dealeth most affectionately with them. *Now we beseech you brethren.* But 4. The Lords Minister ought not ( under pretence of tender and affectionate dealing with those who are tainted with error ) to speak against their errors coldly, as if it were a thing indifferent whether they returned to a right mind or not, but ( as he would be faithful to God, *Gal.* 1. 10. and the souls of people, *2 Cor.* 11. 3. ) he must deal seriously with them, set their hazard before them, and earnestly obtest them, by that which is dearest to them, to quit their error and embrace the contrary



328 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

trary truth; for, thus doth *Paul beseech* and in a kind adjure them *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our gathering together unto him.*

5. Errour about a truth, or any circumstance of it doth (in so far, at least) hinder or endanger the good and comfort, which might be otherwise reaped by it: for, while *Paul* obtests them, that, as they looked for comfort at Christs second coming, so they would beware of that errour which did antedate the time of it, it is implied that their embracing of that errour would in some respect hinder, or at least hazard the comfort which they might have by the faith of that day. *We beseech you*, saith he, *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 6. As Christ will certainly come to judge the world, and all believers shall be gathered to him, as Eagles do resort unto the Carcase, *Matth. 24. 28.* so we ought to entertain thoughts of that day with a kind of religious awe and reverence, to wit, so as we do not mock at it, *2 Pet. 3. 4.* but that (certainly believing it will be) we order all our deportment as we may prepare and make ready for it, *2 Pet. 3. 11, 12.* for, he adjures and obtests them *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him*, now we use not to obtest but by such things which are most certain, and to which we owe a kind of religious respect and reverence. 7. Then is the day of Christs second coming desirable and precious to us, and thought upon as it ought by us, when, having made acquaintance and friendship with Christ our Judge, we have ground of confidence that he will not be  
terrible

terrible but friendly to us in that day, otherwise a man can never think upon it with love, desire and religious reverence, but will abhor the very thoughts of it ; for, as this obtestation implyeth this day to have been desirable unto them and reverently thought upon by them, so *Paul* doth shew from what this did flow, even their interest in Christ the Judge as theirs, and the hope of their being gathered together among the rest of the elect unto him then, while he saith, *by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and our gathering together unto him ; he calleth Christ our Lord, and the gathering, our gathering.*

Ver. 2. *That ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter, as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand.*

The Apostle in this verse doth, first, set forth, in general, that from which he doth dissuade them, to wit, 1. That they would not be soon shaken or suffer themselves to be tossed to and fro like the waves of the Sea ( as the word signifieth ) by the winds of false doctrine *in* or from their mind, that is, from their received opinion and judgement concerning the truth in hand ( as the word is rendred, 1 Cor. 2. 16. and 11. 10. ) or from the right use of their wit and reason, the loss of which he doth hereby insinuate would be the sad fruit of embracing the present error ; and, 2. That they would not be troubled, or suffer themselves to be perplexed, vexed and affrighted with the dreadful representation

representation of approaching judgement, by which, it is like, the promoters of this errour did unceasingly alarm and affright them, for the word is a metaphor taken from souldiers affrighted with a sudden and dreadful alarm. Next, he condescends upon a threefold deceit which the maintainers of this errour did make use of to seduce and unsettle them, which he exhorts them to vilipend as being of no weight : first, they pretended to the spirit, whereby ( as it is contradistinguished to the other two ) must be meant some immediate revelations which they did falsely give out themselves to have had from the spirit of God, *Micah* 2. 11. next, to some unwritten word which, as it seemeth, they did falsely alledge had been spoken by *Paul* or some other Apostle to that purpose, 3. To some Epistle written by *Paul* himself, and this, either the former written to this same Church which it seemeth they did wrest to countenance the present errour, as if he had taught *1 Thes.* 4. 15. that Christ would come to judgement in that present age, or some other Epistle forged by them and fastened upon the Apostle, which hath not been unusual even then, as appears from his great care to subscribe every Epistle with his own hand for preventing such impostures, *chap.* 3. 17. Lastly, he expresseth the particular errour from embracing whereof he doth so affectionately and seriously dissuade them, to wit, that *the day of Christ*, or of Christs second coming, *was at hand*. The word in the Original doth differ from that which is *1 Pet.* 4. 7. and expresseth so much, as if the day of judgement had been *instantly* to fall out in that  
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very age, which doubtless was the opinion vented by those seducers and refuted here by *Paul*. But the word used by *Peter*, expresseth only that it was drawing near, and in what sense he would be understood is explained by himself, 2 *Pet.* 3. 8, 9. to wit, in respect of God, with whom one day is as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day. However *Peter* doth not condescend upon any peremptory time, neither day, year, nor the present age, as those seducers did. *Doct.* 1. The spirit of error is usually most prevalent and taking with people, when it is first hatched and publickly vented. The newness of the thing, the fair pretences wherewith it is coloured, and peoples inadvertence to what it tendeth, make many without deliberation engage in it, and being once engaged to stand to it: and therefore if the first assault of error were once withstood, and time and leisure taken to advise upon it, before we did indeliberately and suddenly close with it, there should not be so much hazard, at least of being carryed away with it; for, he beseecheth them that they be not *soon shaken*, not as if he did allow them to be shaken, provided it were not soon, but because if they did endure the first brunt, and were not soon shaken they would readily not be shaken at all. 2. As a sudden rash and unadvised engaging in the way of error is usually accompanied with a spiritual phrensie and madness, and transporteth men beyond the bounds of right reason, both in the defence and propagation of their error (however they may be abundantly rational in their other actings, 2 *Cor.* 9. 2. with 11. 20.) So an unsound and unsettled

judgement in the point of truth, is usually accompanied with error and disturbance, of the conscience, through fears and doubts. And it is the devilish method of Satans instruments, in seducing the Lords people, once to unsettle their minds, and perplex their consciences thus : that they may hereby make them more plyable to embrace their erroneous doctrine, if so it but seem to promise any ease of mind and peace ; for, while he dissuades them from error, he forbids them to be *soon shaken in mind, or troubled*, the latter as a consequence of the former, and both of them intended by their seducers, as tending to make them more plyable to their design. 3. The fore-mentioned dreadful concomitants of error, to wit, insatiation of mind, perplexedness of heart and affections, the rack and horror of conscience, should scare the Lords people from meddling with, and make them stand aloof from, any thing which tendeth towards it ; for, the general part of the dissuasive hath an implicit reason to inforce their standing aback from the particular error, even because thereby *they would be shaken in mind and troubled*. 4. As there is not any error vented the maintainers whereof will not have somewhat to say in its defence ; So the taking force of all they say for that end consisteth not in the solidity and truth of what they affirm, but in multitude of words, variety of seeming reasons, a fair flourish of specious pretexts, and in impudent, bold and strong assertions, thereby holding up their reputation among their devoted followers, *Act. 8. 9, 10.* and ensnaring the simple who hardly can put a difference betwixt pretext and reality, confident assertions and  
solid

solid proofs; *Rom. 16 — 18.* for, the maintainers of this error did boldly alledge no fewer than three heads of most specious reasons, none whereof did prove the truth of their opinion, and therefore he forbids them to be shaken or troubled with any of them, *neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us.* 5. Perverse and obstinate seducers do often prove in end blasphemous and very Atheists, in so far as (against the light of conscience) to dare to father their groundless untruths upon an immediate revelation from the God of truth; for, those seducers pretended to immediate revelations from the spirit to confirm their error, wherein they could not but know themselves to be lyars. *Neither by spirit,* saith he. 6. As heretical spirits do usually prove most malapert and impudent in opposing themselves to most convincing evidences, if it were to outface an immediately inspired Apostle: So they are most untender of, and labour to trample upon the reputation of all who do oppose them, though they be deservedly eminent, for their graces, gifts and station; for, those seducers do not only oppose themselves to *Paul* an Apostle, but also, because of his opposition to them, labour to disgrace him, while they alledge he did contradict himself, and that they had a word spoken by him asserting that opinion for truth, which he did now condemn, which is implied while he saith, *be not troubled by word, as from us.* 7. Heretical spirits and seducers do also often prove most irreligious, as choosing to shake the foundation of all religion, the authority of Scripture, by making one part thereof contradict another,

ther, rather than they should have nothing to say for their own credit, and to defend their errour: for, it is implied that in this debate they opposed letter to letter, and Scripture to Scripture. *Nor by letter as from us*, saith he. 8. Satan's malice and man's impudence, did come to that height, as to endeavour the corrupting of Scripture by wresting some parts of it from its genuine sense and meaning, and by forging false Scriptures, and giving them out for true, even while the Apostles themselves were alive to contradict them. Which serveth to commend the watchful providence of God over Scripture, and his mercy towards us, in so far as all the attempts of Satan for that end have been hitherto frustrate, and the holy Scriptures transmitted pure and incorrupt from hand to hand through all generations to this present age: for, the *letter* here mentioned was either *Pauls* former Epistle wrested, or a new one forged. *Nor by letter as from us*. 9. It often falleth out that those errours do prove most pestilent, and of dangerous consequence, which have the greatest shew of piety, and carry with them the least fear of hazard from them at the first view; for, this errour, that the day of Christ was instantly to fall out, might seem not only an harmless opinion, but also most useful for putting men to their duty in order to their preparation for that day; yet the Apostle, by this most serious dissuasive from it, doth imply that it was an errour extreamly hazardous; and indeed so it was, for if this opinion had been once received, the truth of Christian Religion, and chiefly of this particular, should have been

been exposed to contempt and scorn in the following age, when the event would have fallen out otherwise than this opinion held forth, which doubtless was Satans great design in fostering it so much. *As that the day of Christ is at hand*, saith he. 10. So subtle is Satan, that he can, and sometimes doth, make one error spring out of the ruines of another, yea and the latter error to resolve in end in the re-establishing of the former, though in it self it be inconsistent with it; And so simple is man, that, under pretence of eschewing one extremity of error, he rusheth forward to the other, by the seen absurdity whereof, and by Satans subtilty, he is at last constrained to embrace of new his old error, which he had formerly forsaken: for, *Paul* having laboured in the former Epistle to settle them in the faith of the resurrection and of a day of Judgement, 1 *Thes.* 4. 14, &c. in opposition, doubtless, to some who did question those truths, as at *Corinth*, 1 *Cor.* 15. 12. some did take occasion hence to run to the other extremity and maintain that the day of Christ should come to pass in that very age, wherein Satans design doubtless was to drive them back again to their former error, that there would be no such day at all, when the event should prove their second opinion to be false. *As that the day of Christ is at hand.*



Ver. 3. *Let no man deceive you by any means :—*

He doth here repeat the former dissuasive from suffering themselves to be *deceived*, or (as the word signifieth) led aside from the way of truth in the present particular, *by any man*, though he were never so learned and holy, or *by any mean*, neither those three mentioned *v. 2.* nor by any other.

*Doct. 1.* So prone are men by nature to embrace error, when it is vented, as being the birth of corrupt natural light, *Eccles. 7. 29.* and tending of it self to gratifie some one or other of our unmortified lusts, *2 Tim. 4. 3.* that there is need of reiterated dissuaves from it, and of often inculcating the self same things by the Lords Ministers, which may tend to guard his people against the power of it : for, he doth here repeat the former dissuasive, *Let no man deceive you.* 2. As Satan laboureth to engage men, of different ranks and dispositions, to be instrumental in carrying on the self same error, and prompteth them with variety of wayes and means for throughing of their work, according to the various tempers of the Lords people whom he intendeth to ensnare, whereof some are more easily wrought upon by one instrument and mean, and some by another : So no consideration of the person tempting, though he were never so insinuatve, discreet, holy and able, or in doctrine otherwayes Orthodox, and no consideration of the means whereby he tempts (though by pretexts most specious, reasons seemingly probable, authority of men almost unquestionable) hath in it sufficient

ficient ground of excuse unto any for suffering himself to be seduced from truth to error; for, he implyeth that there would be several men, and several means, and will have them to stand out against them all, while he saith, *Let no man deceive you by any means.*

Ver. 3. ——— *For that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and that man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition.*

The Apostle in the second part of the Chapter, refuteth the forementioned error from this, That such things behoved to fall out before the day of the Lord, as could not come to pass within the compass of that or many ages, whereof he mentions two, first *a falling away* or (as it is in the original) an apostasie, and defection, not from the Roman Empire, as some do expone it, but from Christ and the purity of the Gospel. And therefore, in opposition to this apostasie, they are exhorted to *stand fast*, not to the Roman Empire, but to the truth of the Gospel, *v. 13.* Besides, it is the same word and the same purpose which is held forth, *1 Tim. 4. 1.* and the Antichrist by whom this apostasie was to be headed is called a false Prophet, *Rev. 16. 13.* and therefore it must be an apostasie from true doctrine, as the word doth alwayes signifie in the New Testament. Neither doth he mean a particular defection of some particular persons or Churches; for there were some such defections already, both of persons, *1 Tim. 1. 20.* and Churches, *Gal. 1. 6.* but a general

neral defection of the whole visible Church, some few only excepted, *Rev.* 13. 8. For therefore is the word *falling away* or apostasie set down indefinitely, and without any restriction. The second thing which was to fall out antecedently to that day, is, the *revealing of the man of sin*, the great head and patron of this apostasie, whom all accord to be that great Antichrist spoken of, *1 Joh.* 2. 18. and 4. 3. and the beast mentioned *Rev.* 13. 11, &c. and the epithetes given him here declare so much, though he be not expressly named. Concerning whom the Apostle doth first foretel that he *shall be revealed* and made known, though not so, as that none should have any doubt concerning him; for then how were it possible that all the world should wonder after the beast, *Rev.* 13. 3. neither were such wisdom requisite to find him out and know him as is required, *Rev.* 13. 18. yet so, as they to whom the Lord hath given eyes to see shall evidently discern him; Which revealing and making of him known was to be effectuated, partly, by the preaching of the Gospel which should discover him, ( *see v. 8.* ) but, chiefly, by his coming to the height of his power, and his exercising of open tyranny over the Church of God. Next, that the Lords people might the better know him when he should discover himself, the spirit of God doth here describe him, first, from his nature, he shall be a *man*, and not a Devil, as some did falsely imagine. Now that he is called a *man* in the singular number, with the article prefixed in the Original, doth not inferr that he should be one single man, and individual person without successi-

on, as the Papiſts imagine, to defend their Pope from being the Antichriſt here deſcribed, but all in vain. For, 1. The ſame word with the article prefixed doth not alwayes point at one individual perſon, but ſometimes muſt be extended to many men, or to any man indefinitely, as *Joh. 2. 25.* *2 Tim. 3. 17.* Secondly, That the Antichriſt cannot be only one individual perſon will be clear if we conſider the many great things which Scripture foretelleth ſhall be effectuated by him, whereof there is one here, to wit, the carrying on of that woful work of an univerſal apoſtaſie from Chriſt and truth through the whole Chriſtian world, preſently ſpoken of, unto an height and head, which ſurely behoved to be a work of more ages than one, otherwiſe the argument here uſed by *Paul* would have been but of ſmall force to prove that the day of judgement ſhould not fall out in the preſent age, becauſe this falling away and apoſtaſie behoved to be firſt; It would have been, I ſay, of no force if that apoſtaſie could have been brought about in the ſpace of one age. Beſides, the ſpirit of Antichriſt was already working, hidly and in a Myſterie, in *Pauls* time, ( ſee upon *v. 7.* ) and in *Johns* time *1 Joh. 4. 3.* and was to continue until the time of Chriſts ſecond coming, ( ſee upon *v. 8.* ) and conſequently he cannot be one only individual perſon. But therefore, thirdly, By *man*, or, *that man*, here is meant a ſeries and conſtant ſucceſſion of men, of whom one was to ſucceed another in their grandeur, power and wickedneſs againſt Chriſt and his Church, as if they were all but one man acted by one and the ſame ſpirit, even as the word High

Prieſt

Priest in the singular number is taken, *Heb. 9. 7.* 25. and as *Daniel, chap. 7.* under every one of the four *beasts* doth comprize a number of Kings succeeding one another in the *Babylonian, Persian,* and *Grecian* Monarchies, yea, and as shall appear upon *v. 7.* the continued series and succession of Roman Emperours is spoken of, as of one man withholding the Antichrist from coming to the height of his power and greatness. Secondly, the Antichrist in this verse is described from two of his titles; first, he shall be a *man of sin*; It is an Hebraism, implying that he shall be a notorious sinner himself, *Rev. 13. 5, 6.* and an Author of sin to others, *Rev. 13. 12, 14.* Like *Jeroboam* who caused *Israel* to sin, *2 King. 11. 10.* Next, a *son of perdition*, that is, one devoted to destruction, *Rev. 17. 8.* as *Judas* was who therefore hath the same title, *Joh. 17. 12.* and one who should destroy others, and that both spiritually in their souls, *Rev. 17. 2.* and corporally in their bodies, *Rev. 17. 6.* for which cause he is called *Apollyon* or a destroyer, *Rev. 9. 11.* Hence Learn, first, as love to ease and desire of freedom from trouble in the Lords people do make them antedate promised deliveries, and dream of a triumph before they have entred the battel: So the Lord in Scripture doth frequently set himself to dispossess his people of this lazy dangerous humour, by shewing that they must first prepare for a long lasting battel before they can expect a compleat victory and full triumph: for, while these *Theſſalonians* did dream of nothing but of a present delivery from all their trouble by Christs second coming, the spirit of God doth here

hereforewarn them to prepare for a long continuing battel with Antichriſt and his followers : *for that day ſhall not come except there come a falling away firſt*, ſaith he. 2. Not only particular Churches and perſons, but even the Catholick Church viſible (the elect only being excepted, *Matth.* 24. 24.) may fall away from the purity of the Goſpel to dangerous and ſoul-deſtroying errors ; and therefore the Church of *Rome* can have no ground to plead for the contrary priviledge, ſeeing not only her future apoſtaſie is more than intimate, *Rom.* 11. 20. but alſo it is here foretold that the Antichriſtian apoſtaſie ſhall, as a deluge, overflow the whole viſible Church, yea and *Rev.* 17. 9. that Antichriſt ſhall erect his throne in the City of *Rome* it ſelf ; for, ſaith he, *except there come a falling away firſt*, to wit, a general apoſtaſie, See the Expoſition. 3. Not only are the ſaddeſt events which can befall the Church foreſeen by God, and powerfully overruled by him, for his own glory, and the good of his elect, *Rom.* 8. 28. but he hath alſo in mercy fore-acquainted his Church with them, that when they come to paſs, none ſhould need to ſtumble at them ; for, therefore it is that the Lord doth here forewarn his Church of this general apoſtaſie : *except there come a falling away firſt*. 4. Even Satans Kingdom, and his many instruments under him, are moſt united in their woſul work, and in uniform means, and wayes for carrying on their work of bearing down the Kingdom of Jeſus Chriſt ; And therefore that union boated of ſo much by Papiſts can be no infallible mark that they are the true Church ; for, though Antichriſtianism ſhall

shall be a Kingdom made up of divers members, wherein shall be many successive heads in several ages (see the exposition) yet, because of their unity and uniformity in driving on one and the same design, they are all called by the name of *one man*: and that *man of sin* be revealed.

5. One step of apostasie from truth in the Church maketh way for an higher. It begins at lesser truths, and from those it advanceth further; Satan doth so design it, that he may gain his intent against truth by piece-meale, which he cannot attain by whole sale; And the Lord himself doth so order it, that he may punish begun apostasie by raining snares in his holy justice upon the guilty, whereby they cannot but backslide more. See v. 11. for, he foretelleth that there shall be *first a falling away*, and then the *man of sin shall be revealed*, or discover himself in his own colours, and be generally received, and so the apostasie should heighten.

6. The nature of man now fallen is a very sink of sin, and, being given over of God and tempted by Satan, is ready to fall in any sin, yea to many sins though never so gross and abominable: and therefore let him that stands take heed lest he fall: for, the Antichrist is *a man of sin*, a *man* by nature, and yet a sink of all sin, *a son of perdition*, an *opposer of God and Christ*, &c. 7. As where sin goeth before, perdition and destruction do follow after: So the more eminent men are in their personal transgressions, and the more active in driving on others to sin with them, they may expect the more inevitable and dreadful destruction from the Lord, as their reward; for, if Antichrist be

be a man of sin, a notorious sinner himself, an author of sin to others first, he shall be a son of perdition next. 8. Though they who are active in driving others on to sin shall smart most for it, as said is, yet those who are seduced and drawn over by them shall not escape ; for, as he is the man of sin for his causing others to sin, so a son of perdition for bringing spiritual perdition upon them also.

Ver. 4. *Who opposeth and exalteth himself above all that is called God, or that is worshipped, so that he as God, sitteth in the Temple of God, shewing himself that he is God.*

The Apostle doth describe the Antichrist, thirdly, from two of his properties ; first, *he opposeth himself*, or ( as it is in the original, ) he is a prime opposite or adversary, to wit unto Christ ; for therefore is he called *Antichrist*, 1 Joh. 2. 18. now every heretick is in so far at least an adversary and opposite to Christ, but he in a special manner : for his opposition was, 1. To be most potent, as having a fixed orderly Kingdom, whereof he is head, set up in opposition to Christ, 2. More universal, as setting himself to undermine every Christian truth almost, 3. He was to oppose Christ especially in those truths relating to Christs offices to which he was anointed as the name, *Christ*, and *Antichrist*, in the greek imply. Only know that what is spoken here of Antichrists opposition to Christ, and afterwards of his shewing himself *that he is God*, must not be understood as if he would profess so much in words, which the Papists affirm ;  
for,



for, as followeth immediately, he shall sit in the Temple of God, and Antichristianism is called a myserie, *v. 7.* besides he shall be a false Prophet, *Rev. 16. 13.* and have the horns of the Lamb, *Rev. 13. 11.* and consequently, a famous hypocrite and dissembler, (as some of the Papists are forced to confesse) yea and shall be adored by the world of professed Christians, *Rev. 12. 13.* which is not imaginable, if he were a professed enemy to Christ and an avowed Atheist. And therefore his opposition to Christ and God, here spoken of, is real and in deeds, but under a mask and pretence of friendship. The Antichrists second property is his intolerable pride and arrogance, first, in relation to men, and the chief of men, He should exceedingly and above measure *exalt himself* (as the word is rendred, *2 Cor. 12. 7.*) and this, *above all that is called God.* I conceive he meaneth not the true God, for he is spoken of after, but earthly Magistrates who are called Gods, *Psal. 82. 1.* above whom he should exalt himself, by usurping power over them to enthrone and dethrone them at pleasure, *Rev. 17. 12, 13.* and this not only inferior Magistrates and Kings over particular Kingdoms, but Emperours and mighty Monarchs over many realms, expressed here in these words, *or that which is worshipped.* The word in the Original doth signifie that which is holden in highest degree of reverence, whether religious or civil, and with a little variation was an usual stile given to the Roman Emperours, which did difference them most from other Magistrates, *Act. 25. 21, 25.* Next, his arrogance is set forth in relation to the

true

true God, which is brought in as an higher step following upon the former, and joyntly herewith he gives a fourth branch of his description, from the greatness of his power, and the place where he shall exercise it. First, *he shall sit*, the Apostle doth not mean local or corporal sitting, but his supream and sealed power, rule and government set forth ost by *sitting*, *Psal. 9. 4. Ezek. 28. 2.* Next, the place wherein he shall sit or rule, is, *the temple of God*, not the Temple at *Jerusalem* (as some Papists affirm, though others of them are forced to acknowledge the truth) for that Temple is ruined many years since, *Matth. 24. 1, 2.* the re-edifying whereof ever since (when several times attempted as Histories shew) hath been signally impeded from Heaven. And though it should be built again by Antichrist to be worshipped therein, yet it could not be called *the Temple of God* but rather of the Devil: and therefore hereby must be meant the Church of God, not so much the material house of stones and timber, where the Church doth meet, as the Christian Church of visible professours, in which the Antichrist shall set himself as head and chief, and which he shall tyrannically oppress. See the Temple of God taken in this sense, *1 Cor. 3. 16. 6. 16.* And here, as I formerly said, the Apostle intermixeth the second branch of the Antichrists arrogance, to wit, in relation to God, whereby 1. He shall manage his rule and government in the Church *as God*, pretending to have no less than divine authority even the same with God and Christ, *Rev. 13 — 11 —* he shall shew himself that he is God not professing so much in words

### 346 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

words ( as is already proved ) but, as the Greek word signifieth, shewing or attempting to shew by his actions that he is no less to be esteemed of than God, while he either attributes unto himself, or suffers others to ascribe unto him and discharge towards him, such things as belong only to God, as divine titles, worship and properties, *Rev. 13.4. Doct. 1.* The spirit of God doth not judge of men To much by what they say, as by what they do, not by fair pretences, but by the reality of their practises, and willeth us to judge accordingly: for, though the Antichrist sit in the Temple of God, pretending he doth all things for Christ and at his command, yet because he doth really and in deeds oppose Christ, therefore he is called an opposite to him: *who opposeth himself.* 2. An opposite and adversary to God and Christ doth seldom prove a faithful friend to man, whosoever doth once break his trust to the former, he will not spare to trample upon the latter, if it may conduce for his interest and doth not exceed the reach of his power: for, upon the Antichrist his opposing himself to God and Christ, doth follow his arrogance to man, in *exalting himself* above the supream Civil Magistrate, even *all that is called God or is worshipped.* See the exposition. 3. A spirit of pride and arrogance is insatiable and indefatigable, and extreemly daring: It must be all and above all, otherwise it is nothing, and where it is attended with success, it attempteth things almost impossible, and remaineth indefatigable until the height aspired at be once attained: for, Antichrist in his arrogancy, though he be but a false Prophet,

Prophet, *Rev. 16. 13.* *aspireth above Kings, yea Emperours, and ceaseth not until he work himself up above them all : he exalts himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.* 4. One degree of sin doth so much make way for a further, that those things which at the first men do stick at, will, through the continued custome of some lesser degrees of those same evils; be easily swallowed at last and without reluctance ; for, Antichrists arrogance against man maketh way for his arrogance against God and hardneth him in it, as the Apostle insinuates, while he saith, *so that he as God sitteth;* making this his pride against God follow upon the former. 5. The Antichrist is not to be sought without the visible Church, neither among the Turks, as some do imagine, nor yet among the Jews, as the Papists do dream, that Antichrist shall be one individual person without succession, by Nation a Jew, of the Tribe of *Dan*, born of an Whore in *Babylon*, a profest enemy to the very name of Christian Religion, shall draw the Jews after him, build the Temple at *Jernsalem*, cause himself to be worshipped therein as the true and living God, and yet be a secret worshipper of the Devil, that he it all bring all Kingdoms under him, Reign precisely three years and an half, kill *Enoch* and *Elias* the fore-runners of Christ, and at last himself be killed by Christ or an Angel forty five dayes before the day of Judgement, which fable as it is maintained by them to defend their Pope from being Antichrist, so it appeareth abundantly to be but a fabulous invention by the whole current of this Propheſie, and especially by that which is here

affirmed, *He shall sit in the Temple of God*, and therefore is to be found, not without, but, within the visible Church, even a Bishop claiming universal authority over the whole Church, accompanied with an army of Priests as one of their own Popes did maintain a little before the Antichrist did come to his height. *He shall sit*, saith *Paul*, *in the Temple of God*. See the Exposition.

Ver. 5. *Remember ye not, that when I was yet with you, I told you these things ?*

The Apostle closeth the former description by giving them a gentle and indirect reproof for their oblivion and ignorance of the truths presently delivered, as that which had unsettled them in the present truth concerning the time of Christs second coming, and hereby addeth a weight to what he had now written about the Antichrist, while he sheweth that it was not a doctrine newly invented, but that he had formerly told them fully of it, and instructed them in all its particular branches while he was with them at *Thessalonica*, *Act. 17. 1, 2.* and therefore they ought to have remembered it. *Doct. 1.* As the Church enjoyeth now and then some peaceable times, wherein the Gospel hath free passage without any considerable check or restraint either from error or persecution : So it is the duty both of Pastors and people to improve so rich a mercy to the best advantage : and especially then the Lords servants should give frequent warnings of future evils, that the people of God may fore-arm themselves against an approaching storm ;

storm; for, while the Church at *Thessalonica* enjoyed some little respite from trouble, *Paul* doth stir his time among them, and gives them warning that the Churches tryals under Antichrist was coming. *When I was yet with you I told you these things.* 2. As it is a blame-worthy fault, too frequently incident unto the Lords people, to forget what necessary truths have been taught unto them by their faithful Pastors, and especially those which tend to make them shake off security and ease, and prepare for eminent tryals: So forgetfulness of this kind doth encourage Satan to sow among them targs of errour, which otherwise he would have but little heart to venture on, as despairing his pains should meet with the desired success; for, *Paul* insinuates they had forgot, and reproves them indirectly for it, as that which had encouraged Satan to brangle them about the time of Christs coming, which they could not have imagined to come in the present age, if they had but remembred what he had taught them about the Antichrist. *Remember ye not (saith he) I told you these things?*

Ver. 6. *And now ye know what withholdeth, that he might be revealed in his time.*

Because the Apostle had shewn v. 3. that the Antichrist must be revealed antecedently to Christs second coming, he doth now, in the third branch of this prophesie, speak something of the time when he should be revealed, and of the lets and impediments, which for the time did hinder his discovery: And first, he sheweth he was not yet revealed,

and therefore they were not to expect the day of Christs second coming so soon as they did, while he mentions something which did then *withhold*, or stay and hinder his revealing and publick appearing in the height of his power for a season, the Lords overruling providence so ordering *that he might be revealed*, not before, but, *in his time*, that is, the time prefixed by God for that thing. Now by this stop and obstacle in the way of Antichrists rising greatness must be meant some man, person or persons, as appears from *v. 7.* where he is spoken of as such, *only he who now letteth*; and the general current of Interpreters, both Popish and Protestant, and many ancient Fathers also, do agree that hereby is understood the supream authority and respect of the ancient Emperours in the Roman Empire, who by their eminent temporal power did hinder the arising of Antichrists spiritual power over the Christian world, and upon whose ruines the Antichrist was to arise, and to possess their Throne and seat in the City seituat upon seven hills, *Rev. 17. 9.* even *Rome* that great City which did then Reign over the Kings of the Earth, *Rev. 17. 18.* and though the Apostle had expressed so much to them while he was with them (for therefore he saith they *knew* what did *withhold*) yet he doth not judge it convenient to expresse it by letter, lest thereby he had provoked the Emperours of *Rome* against the Christians, when they should hear that a professed Christian would overthrow the present government of the Empire, and rise upon their ruine. *Doct. 1.* The wise Lord in his eternal decree hath not only condescended,

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among other things, upon the sad calamities and sharp tryals which he hath thought fit to exercise his people by, but also upon the meanest circumstance of all their troubles, even the very point of time, most seasonable for Gods glory and his peoples good, wherein they shall break forth, is weighed in the scales of his eternal wisdom, and accordingly fixed upon by him ; for, here *Paul* speaks of a *due time* prefixed by God, wherein the Antichrist was to be revealed for the Churches tryal, *that he might be revealed in his time*. The word signifieth a fit and seasonable nick of time. 2. Such is the malice of Satan and of devilish Instruments against the Church of Christ, that they gladly would, and accordingly do endeavour to antedate the time of the Churches tryal prefixed by God, and to hasten forward the height of her calamity with such celerity, as that the Lords people should be overwhelmed with it, before they be forewarned of it, or get any time to make ready for it ; for, Antichrist would have revealed himself sooner than his due time, if somewhat had not withheld. *And now ye know what withholdeth*, saith he. 3. It pleaseth the Lord, in mercy unto his people, to sist the violent course of devils and men, to carry their counsels headlong, so that their hands cannot fulfil their woful enterprize of bringing the Churches trouble unto an height, before the time appointed by God, as most fitting for it, do fully come : And this he doth by casting in such lets and impediments as prove insuperable either by devils or men ; for, while Antichrist doth haste to be re-



352 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

vealed, God casts in a lett to withhold of purpose, *that he might not be revealed before his due time.* 4. Such absolute soveraign power hath God to encline the wills of men whithersoever he pleaseth, *Prov. 21. 1.* that he often maketh even them who are enemies to him to bring about his counsell for good to his Church and people, beyond their own intention and purpose; for, God did so order that the Roman Emperours, even while Heathens, did *withhold* the Antichrist from coming to the height of his power and Tyranny over the Church, until *his due time.* 5. Some points of truth, the publishing whereof are not of such necessity as to countervaille the dammage, may safely be concealed in prudence, when the untimely publishing of them in all probability will hasten persecution, and mar either the internal or external peace of the Church. Such serpentine wisdom doth well consist with the Doves simplicity and Christian zeal, *Matth. 10. 16.* for, *Paul* doth not here express that the Roman Empire by name should withhold, until it were taken out of the way, lest he had thereby hastened persecution. *And now ye know what withholdeth,* saith he.

*Ver. 7. For the mysterie of iniquity doth already work: only he who now letteth, will let, until he be taken out of the way.*

He doth here, first, give a reason for what he presently spoke, that the Roman Empire did impede, not the being, but, the revealing and discovery

very of the Antichriſt and Antichriſtianiſm, be-  
cauſe they already had entred the Church, though  
not avowedly, yet ſecretly. Antichriſtian Do-  
minion and Doctrine were even then *working* and  
advancing by little and little towards an height, in  
ſo far as juſtification by works, *Gal. 2. 16.* the  
worſhipping of Angels, *Col. 2. 18.* abſtinenſe from  
certain kinds of meats, *Col. 2. 21.* and from mar-  
riage, and ſuch like Antichriſtian Doctrines, were  
then Preached, and deſire of rule and preheminence  
among Churchmen over their brethren, and the  
flock of Chriſt had then poſſeſſed the aspiring ſpi-  
rits of ſome, 3 *Job. 9.* Which Antichriſtian do-  
ctrines and tyranny he calls a *myſterie*, or, a thing  
hid and ſecret, chiefly with reſpect to the Apoſtles  
time, and the time following until Antichriſt ſhould  
be revealed, becauſe Antichriſtianiſm then, toge-  
ther with thoſe other Heresies which made way for  
it, did ſecretly and under a ſhew of devotion and  
piety (*Col. 2. 23.*) advance and promove from  
evil to worſe, 2 *Tim. 3. 13.* until they might end  
in the almoſt total overthrow of Chriſtian Reli-  
gion at the laſt. Beſides that Antichriſtian do-  
ctrine and tyranny were ſtill to remain a Myſterie,  
even after that Antichriſt ſhould come to his height,  
ſo that a man, without eye-ſalve from God, ſhall  
hardly diſcern it, becauſe of the fair pretences of  
love to Chriſt, to truth and to piety under which  
he was to lurk; for therefore is he called a falſe  
Prophet, *Rev. 16. 13.* and ſaid to have two horns  
like a Lamb, *Rev. 13. 11.* pretending to do all in  
Chriſt the Lambs name, and to make uſe of his  
horns and power as his ſubſtitute and Vicar. And

it is called a *mysterie of iniquity*, as in opposition to the doctrine of Christ, called a *mysterie of Godliness*, 1 *Tim.* 3. 16. so because Antichrists doctrine and way (however most fair and specious in pretext, yet) in reality and deed should be nothing else but error, untruth, impiety against God, *Rev.* 13. 5. and unrighteousness against man, *Rev.* 13. 17. for the word rendred, *iniquity*, doth express the general nature of sin, and as it were all sin whatsoever, 1 *Joh.* 3. v. 4. Next, he sheweth how long the authority of the Roman Emperours succeeding one another (called here *he who letteth*) should prove a stop in the way of Antichrists growing greatness, even *until he be taken out of the way*, that is, until their power be so broken, as that they should not be able any longer to withstand this arising spiritual dominion, and especially until they should leave *Rome*, the seat of the Empire, fully void and free, wherein the Antichrist was to erect his Throne, *Rev.* 17. 9. *Doct.* 1. So great an enemy is Satan to mans salvation, that no sooner did Christ erect a Kingdom in the world for saving sinners, but as soon, at least within a little, the devil did counter-work, by endeavouring to erect an Antichristian Kingdom, thereby to render the Kingdom of Christ, so far as in him lay, wholly useless: and therefore antiquity, so much boasted of by Papists, is no undoubted mark of the true Church, for Antichristianism is but by few years of latter standing than the Kingdom of Christ under the Gospel; *for, the mysterie of iniquity doth already work*, saith he. 2. So subtle an enemy also is Satan, and so full of foresight, as that he hath  
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many designs on foot at once, for effectuating his woful and malicious purpose, that so when one falleth by, and becometh useles, another may hold and carry on his work, so as the field be never fully empty : for, though the Roman Empire at this time was fully employed for carrying on the design of Satan in bearing down the Kingdom of Christ, yet foreseeing, or at least fearing, that it would be taken out of the way, he begins in time to provide himself of the Antichristian state, to carry on this woful work in their room, *the mysterie of iniquity doth already work.* 3. So suble an enemy also is Satan, as that, when his power and interest is not so great, as that he may safely work above ground, and carry on his work avowedly in open view of all, he contents himself to remain undiscovered, and rather to advance with a slow pace and undiscernably, than by too much precipitancy to discover his design untimely, and consequently to expose it to crushing ; for, while the Roman Empire was in strength and vigour, and so would have crushed that design of setting up an Antichristian state in *Rome*, he wrought in a mysterie, *The mysterie of iniquity doth already work.* 4. Satan and his instruments, especially heretical spirits, are not alwayes idle, when they do not kyth, but usually are most active in carrying on their woful work as they find access, when they appear least ; for, when Antichristianism durst not kyth above board, yet it did work, *the mysterie of iniquity doth already work.* 5. The evil of errour, especially of Antichristian errours, and the height at which they aimed, neither doth, nor did kyth

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at first; and therefore it is no wonder, though men, otherwise gracious in the primitive times, who were kept busie in maintaining truth against other avowed errors of those times, did unawares, and through inadvertence, contribute somewhat to countenance the rising of that Episcopall seat in some steps of its usurped dominion over the Church of Christ, which, though improved moderately and for the terrour of hereticks at first, yet, in the Ages following, after the removal of these reverend and gracious fathers, it did end in avowed Antichristian tyranny; for, Antichristianism did for a long time *work in a myserie*. 6. Greatest Empires and worldly Monarchies which caused their terrour in the Land of the living (*Ezek. 32. 23, 24.*) have their own fatal period, determined and foreknown by God longer than which they cannot stand. The Lord giving hereby an evident demonstration of his justice, while he visibly avengeth all those wrongs and insolencies, which they by their power and terrour have acted towards others, especially his Church, and putting a difference betwixt all earthly powers, and the spiritual Kingdom of Jesus Christ under the Gospel, which shall never be destroyed, nor left unto other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all those Kingdoms, and it shall be for ever, *Dan. 2. 44.* for, he saith even the Roman Empire *shall be taken out of the way*. 7. When the time prefixed by God, for bringing about a work either of judgement or mercy, is fully come, all impediments and hinderances, even the greatest, though flourishing Kingdoms and mighty Empires which formerly did lett it, are easily

eaſily and with little ado removed ; for, it is here foretold th t when the due time of diſcovering the Antichriſt ſhould come, *he who then did lett*, to wit, the Roman Empire, *would be taken out of the way.*

Ver. 8. *And then ſhall that wicked one be revealed,* ———

The Apoſtle doth now ſhew the time when the Antichriſt ſhould be revealed, or diſcover himſelf by exerciſing his open and avowed tyrannies over the Church of Chriſt ; to wit, *then*, when he who did lett ſhould be taken out of the way, that is, as was before expounded, when the power of the Roman Empire ſhould be weakned and rendered wholly unable to reſiſt the growing greatneſs of the Antichriſt. Neither is it neceſſary to condeſcend here upon a peremptory point of time, but as the one through a long tract of time ſhould decreaſe, ſo the other ſhould increaſe ; and he calleth the Antichriſt here, *That wicked one*, or (as it is in the Original) *that lawleſs one*, who ſhould hold himſelf to be bound by no Law, neither Gods Law, or mans Law, but above all Law, ſo as he may diſpenſe with Law, and interpret Law according to his pleaſure. *Doct. 1.* That the great Antichriſt here foretold is already come, and hath diſcovered himſelf by exerciſing his open and avowed tyranny, is clear from this, that the very point of time prefixed by God for his publick appearing, is, the taking of that out of the way which formerly did lett him, to wit, the

358 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

the Roman Empire. Now sure it is, that though the name of an Emperour and Empire doth still remain, yet his Imperial Power and authority is fully removed in *Asia*, in *Africk*, yea in *Rome* it self the ancient seat of the Empire, where he hath now no command at all, but left it fully void for Antichrist to erect his Throne; neither hath he any thing left him in *Europe* proper to him as Roman Emperour, except the bare title and some ceremonies and complements, with a little power and authority in *Germany*, but far below that which the Roman Emperours of old enjoyed, and even this little he cannot have but at the Popes pleasure, who must approve the Emperours election, otherwise it is null. Now it was not the name or shadow, but the power, majesty and authority of the Empire, and especially the Emperours interest in *Rome* the ancient Imperial seat, which did withhold the Antichrists rising greatness. And therefore that being removed, the only thing which impeded his revealing is taken away, and consequently, Antichrist must be revealed already, and not yet to come as Papists affirm: for, saith he, *and then* (to wit when he who now lettereth shall be taken out of the way v. — 7.) *shall that wicked one be revealed.*

Ver. — 8. *Whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

Lest the Lords people had been above measure terrified by what remains of this dreadful prophesie, concerning Antichrists wonderful power and success, therefore the Apostle, before he proceed further, doth, in this fourth branch of the Prophesie, for the comfort of the Godly, foretel Antichrists destruction ; whereof he mentioneth three degrees : first, the *Lord Christ*, who is the principal author of this destruction, *shall consume him*, not in a moment, but, as the word signifieth, by little and little, piece and piece, weaken his respect and power in the Church of God : and this *with the spirit*, or breath, of *his mouth*, or, the powerful preaching of the Gospel by his sent Ministers, *Rev.* 14. 6, 7. who are as Christs mouth, through whom he breatheth out the word of his everlasting Gospel. ( See the Preaching of the Gospel called *the rod of his mouth and breath of his lips*, *Isa.* 11. 4. ) Secondly, *he shall destroy him*, that is, as the word signifieth, utterly abolish, enervate and make void, to wit, his power and respect, and that *with the brightness of his second coming* ; for, the word rendred, brightness, is usually joyned with his coming to judgement ; see *Titus* 2. 13. only because the last blow to be given to the Antichrists person seemeth to precede the last day, *Rev.* 19. 20. therefore we must look on this last step of his destruction, as containing divers particular strokes



strokes in it, as first a stroke upon *Rome* the seat of the beast, *Rev.* 18. 2. next, upon the person of the beast, or Antichrist himself, *Rev.* 19. 20. after which it is like the Antichristian Kingdom will want an head. Thirdly, upon all the relicts of Antichristianism, and all who shall after that adhere to their errors and superstitions, of which sort it is probable there will be some even until the last day. And accordingly it is safest to conceive of Christs second coming with some latitude, so as it may mean not only the very last day, but also the foregoing signs and evidences of its approaching, of which those glorious dispensations of his power in overturning the beast himself and his seat shall not be the least. *Doct.* 1. So tender is God of his believing people, that, though he see it sometimes necessary to acquaint them with such things as will put them to grief, yet, he postponeth no time in hastening to them with a timely and seasonable comfort, when he seeth their hazard of fainting through excessive fear and discouragement calleth for it: for, he breaks in upon the midst of this dreadful prophesie with the comfortable tydings of Antichrists future destruction, *whom the Lord shall consume*, saith he. 2. Our Lords most glorious conquests and victories, in which most of himself is seen, are those which are obtained not so much by outward force, by might or by power, *Zech.* 4. 6. as by the plain and powerful preaching of his mighty word, which being the rod of his strength, *Psal.* 110. 2: he doth thereby brui'e his enemies, and break them asunder; while he discovereth to open view their doings, errors and deceits where-  
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in their great strength doth lye, *Heb. 4. 12.* while he subdueth some of their followers unto himself, *Act. 9. 1, &c.* and doth vex and gall others as seeing their power and reputation daily weakened by such a contemptible mean, *Rev. 16. 10, 11.* which nevertheless they cannot hinder: for, our Lord shall consume Antichrist by the spirit of his mouth. 3. Whatever power or efficacy the word Preached hath for bringing about the fore-mentioned effects, it proceedeth not from any power or vertue in the word it self, *Heb. 4. 2.* or in them who do dispense it, *1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.* but from the powerful influence of the Lord Christ, through whom alone the Word preached is mighty to overthrow all strong holds and cast down vain imaginations, *2 Cor. 10. 4, 5.* for, he sheweth it is the Lord Christ who shall consume Antichrist by the spirit of his mouth. 4. The Antichrist spoken of in Scripture, cannot be he which Papists present us with, to wit, one individual person, by Nation a Jew, &c. who shall be killed at an instant, either immediately by Christ himself, or by an Angel at his direction; for, the Antichrist shall not be destroyed at once but by little and little, and first cast as it were into a bed of languishing, his total overthrow being to follow after, *whom the Lord shall consume and destroy.* See the exposition. 5. Though the Lord might destroy his strongest enemies at an instant, *Isa. 37. 36.* and when he begins also make an end, *1 Sam. 3. 12.* yet his usual way is to advance toward their total ruine by certain degrees and steps; that somewhat of his glory may be seen in every step, *Psal. 59. 11.* that such of them as are appointed

appointed for mercy may, in the mean time, be drawn to repentance, *Rom. 2. 4.* and others rendred inexcusable, *Rom. 2. 5.* and that his people may be kept in exercise betwixt hopes and fears, thanksgiving for what is already done, *Psal. 56. 12, 13.* earnest prayer and dependence upon God for completing of what doth yet remain; *Psal. 56. 13.* for, it is here foretold that this shall be his way with the Antichrist, *whom the Lord shall consume* by little and little, as the word signifies. 6. As there are but small grounds of hope from Scripture that the word preached shall convert the Antichrist, or work a reformation among his devoted followers, it shall *consume* him, but not convert him; So where the word preached in life and power doth not prevail to the conversion of those who hear it now, it is an undoubted fore-runner of eternal destruction to be inflicted upon them by Christ the Lord, when he shall come in glory to judge the world hereafter; for, because the spirit of Christs mouth doth only consume and not convert the Antichrist, Therefore shall *Christ destroy him with the brightness of his coming.* 7. As the seeds of Antichristianism were early sown in the Church (see *v. 7. doct. 1.*) so they are to continue long, even until Christs second coming to judge the world; and therefore the Church is not to dream of having any time fully free from trouble of all sorts until then, neither is that perpetuity and long continuance of doctrine publickly professed through many succeeding ages, whereof the Papists boast, an infallible mark of a true Church; for somewhat of Antichrist and Antichristianism will be in the

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the world so long as it lasts. *Whom the Lord shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

Ver. 9. *Even him whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and lying wonders.*

The Apostle, in the first branch of this Propheſie, returns to ſpeak more fully of Antichriſts coming, whereby is meant not only his firſt advancement and raiſing to his power, but the tract of his government in defending, ruling and enlarging of his Kingdom, which is deſcribed from his auxiliary forces, helps, or means, by the aſſiſtance whereof he ſhould procure to himſelf a general reſpect and eſteem in the Chriſtian world; and thoſe are three, whereof two are in this verſe, firſt, *the working*, or, as the word ſignifieth, the utmoſt efficacy and moſt powerful operation of Satan, who ſhould employ the height of his great power, piercing knowledge, malicious wit, indefatigable diligence, and marvellous activity for ſupporting and enlarging of Antichriſts Kingdom. The ſecond help is *all power and ſigns*, &c. or power of ſigns, by an uſual flowre of ſpeech expreſſing one thing by two words, and the meaning is that Satan ſhould aſſiſt him, and his officers under him, with a power and faculty of working ſigns and wonders for confirmation of his tyranny and falſe doctrine, *Rev. 13. 13, 14.* and firſt he calls this power *all power*, not as if either Satan or Antichriſt were omnipotent, or had power to do what they pleaſe, *Job 1. 12. Act. 4. 28.* but it's

all created power, or the utmost of what created skill and understanding can reach. 2. He calls them *lying wonders*, or, as it is in the Original, *wonders of lies* or falsehood, which agreeth both to signs and wonders, as indeed they are usually taken for one and the same thing in different respects, *Rom.* 15. 19. *Mark.* 13. 22. and they are false and lying, because some of them were to be but counterfeit and feigned, meer jugglings, deceiving the outward senses, and others of them, (though truly done and breeding marvel and astonishment in beholders, who know not the manner and way how they are done, yet ) should not be true miracles as being only effects of some secret natural causes, for only God can produce true Miracles, or works exceeding the reach of all natural causes, *Psal.* 72. 18. 77. 13. *Rom.* 4. 17. And lastly, all of them should be wrought by Satan, and his instruments to confirm false and lying doctrines, and therefore are justly called *lying wonders*. *Doct.* 1. Though Satans power is not illimited, *Job* 2. 6. neither can he infallibly determine the wills of men to follow his suggestions, *Job* 1. 12. with 22. yet as he hath no small power upon this sub-lunary world ( see upon *Eph.* 2. v. 2. *doct.* 8. ) yea and great influence upon mens actions by presenting them with such tentations as are most agreeable unto their temper, 2 *Sam.* 11. 2. and importuning them uncessantly with inward suggestions and representations unto their fancy of such things as may most conduce for his purpose ; *Prov.* 4. 16. So such is his enmity to Christs Kingdom, and malice to mans salvation, that he exerciseth the  
utmost

utmoſt of all his power can reach to bear down the one and impede the other : and therefore it is no wonder to ſee ſome of thoſe who are engaged under him in that woful work, ſomewhat elevated above the ſpear of ordinary activity, ſkill, and diligence ; for, he ſhews that Satans working or utmoſt activity, ſhall be employed againſt Chriſt for promoting Antichriſts Kingdom. *Whoſe coming is after the working of Satan.* 2. It is a piece of neceſſary wiſdom in the Lords people, in forecaſting tryals, not to extenuate what hazard is in them, but to look upon them as they are cloathed with all their terrifying circumſtances, whereby they may prepare for the uttermoſt before it come ; *Job 3. 25, 26.* for, the ſpirit of God ſeeth it neceſſary to preſent this tryal under Antichriſt to the Church in its full terrour. *Whoſe coming is after the working of Satan with all power, &c.* 3. Satan doth ſet himſelf, in furthering the condemnation of ſinners, to imitate Chriſt in many of thoſe things which are done by him in bringing about the ſalvation of the elect ; as Chriſt erects a Kingdom in the world whereof himſelf is head, *Pſal. 2. 6.* So Satan hath his Kingdom in oppoſition to Chriſts, whereof Antichriſt is the viſible head, *Rev. 13. 11, 12.* As Chriſt doth impart the influences of his ſpirit unto his ſervants, whereby they work effectually in thoſe who are ſaved, *Col. 1. 29.* So Satan to the utmoſt of his power doth act his instruments, whereby through Gods permiſſion they work effectually in thoſe who periſh, *Rev. 18. 13, 14.* As Chriſt did confirm his doctrine by miracles,

racles, and exercise his power in his servants in working miracles mediately by them for that end, *Heb. 2. 3, 4.* So doth Satan confirm his erroneous doctrine in Antichrists Kingdom, by working signs and wonders, and sometimes lendeth his power to Antichrist and his Vassals to work the like: for, he shews that Satan doth help Antichrist to and in his Kingdom by his effectual working, and by a power of signs and wonders.

4. However Satan set himself to imitate Christ thus, for blinding the eyes of men, and making them believe that his Kingdom, Ministers, and Doctrines and Miracles do differ nothing from Christs, yet he comes not so far up to his copy but the Lords people, who have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil, may find a difference betwixt what is Satans and what is Christs; for his wonders are, and will be found to be but lying wonders.

*Ver. 10. And with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness, in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.*

In this Verse he, first, expresseth the third mean and help which Antichrist was to make use of for heightning his respect and credit in the Christian world, *all deceiveableness of unrighteousness*, where by *unrighteousness*, it seemeth, must be mainly meant his unrighteous false doctrine, because *v. 12.* it is opposed to *truth*, as also *1 Cor. 13. 6.* and it is so called, because it should tend

to make the receivers of it injurious to God, unjust to men, and cruel to themselves. And by *deceivableness* is meant all manner of deceits, tricks, strong and cunning perswasions, which he should make use of to make the world believe his unrighteous errors to be pure and innocent truths, such as sophistical disputations, *Col. 2. 8.* pretexts to piety and devotion, *Matth. 23. 14.* baits of riches, pleasures and preferments, *2 Pet. 2. 18, 19.* boasts and threatnings, *Rev. 13. 17.* and suchlike. Next, he enters the sixth branch of this prophesie wherein he speaketh to the Antichrists great success by the former means and helps; and for the comfort of the Godly he astricts this success unto a certain kind of men, who should be his subjects and sworn vassals. And those he describeth, first, from their everlasting state, *they shall perish eternally*, to wit, they, who should joyn with him in all his errors, even those who strike most at the foundation, and persist in them obstinately and finally without repentance, *Rev. 13. 18.* and *18. 4.* which holds especially in them who would adhere to him after that the Lord should discover his damnable doctrines and tyranny by the light of the Gospel, *Rev. 14. 6, 7, 8, 9, &c.* Next, from the cause of their destruction, to wit, when all of them should have an offer of saving truth, some in one measure, some in another, yet through want of *love* to it they would *not receive* it, that is, they would reject it, for more is intended than is expressed by this word; whence he hints at the conclusion which he intends to prove, to wit, that they could not be saved, but behoved to perish, while he sheweth that receiving of the



truth in love is a necessary antecedent of salvation.

*Doct. 1.* It is the nature and way of such as are ring-leaders of errours, to find out and prosecute all possible means and wayes, which may in any measure tend to make their teners plausible, and pass for truths; that what is wanting to their errours in the point of divine authority, and sanctified reason, may be supplied, by their pretences to piety, antiquity, by their gratifying of mens lusts, sophistical disputations, passionate perswasions, and all such other devices, which serve to blind the eyes even of the wise, that they cannot so well discern betwixt the truth and falshood of what they hear; for, it is here foretold that Antichrist should come *with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness*, or all manner of deceits to perswade the receiving of his unrighteous doctrine. 2. Ring-leaders of error are usually men of little conscience, in so far as they stand not much upon the nature and kind of the means they use, whether they be right or wrong, if so they can serve their present design: for, Antichrist doth use *all deceiveableness of unrighteousness*. 3. So tender is God of his peoples comfort, that, for the most part, those Scriptures which terrifie most are so contrived as to carry with them an antidote of comfort against hopeles discouragement in their bosom: for, this terrifying Scripture which speaks of Antichrists future success, hath in it a comfort, to wit, that his power and success is limited only to reprobates, even *them that perish*. 4. Though even the Godly elect may be seduced to error for a time, *Phil. 3. 15.* yet they cannot arrive at such an height of malicious blindness, as against

against all means of their reclaiming to remain obstinate in the bulk and most fundamental of Antichristian errours, and to persist in their obstinacy unto death : for, it is here foretold he should so prevail only *in those who perish*. 5. When foulest and most dangerous errours are carried on with fair pretexts, subtle insinuations, pithy perswasions, they will not want a multitude of blind followers ; for, Antichristian untruths being carried on by *all deceiveableness*, are received generally by those *who perish*. 6. Though the Lord hath no regard to the future sin of reprobates, as the cause of their reprobation, *Rom. 9. 11, 12.* yet he actually condemneth none of those, no not the Antichrists most active followers, whose sin is not the cause of their condemnation ; and therefore none shall have reason to complain that they do perish unjustly and without a cause : for, the cause why they perish is here expressed, *because they received not the love of the truth*. 7. Among all the sins of a people professing Christ, which deserve condemnation, and for which reprobates shall actually be condemned, the contempt of the Gospel is the first and chief. It is a sin against the remedy of sin, and which provoketh the Lord in his holy justice to give up the person guilty to the power and slavery of several other sins ; so that uncleannesses, murders, perjuries, &c. are but streams flowing from this woful fountain ; for, he mentioneth none of their other sins as the cause of their destruction but this alone, *because they received not the love of the truth*, saith he. 8. If even the least report of Gospel truths and of Christ be not received and made wel-

370 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

come, it is a sin sufficient to provoke the Lord to plague the person guilty in such a manner as he shall never recover, but undoubtedly perish; and therefore how much more when Christ and the Gospel is fully and plainly taught, and yet the gracious offers of mercy therein contained are abused and slighted? for, it is but a small and passing report of truth and Christ, which many of Antichrists followers do hear, being compared with what we now enjoy, and yet they perish *because they received not the truth in love.* 9. It is not sufficient to receive the truth, because the politick Laws of the Land enjoyn so much, or upon any other account, but from love to it; otherwise Satan, Antichrist, or some suitable temptation from any other art, will easily prevail to make him who hath so received it slip from it; for, they *perish*, and are given over to Antichrists delusions as appears from *v. 11. because they received not the love of the truth.* 10. There is no middle betwixt Heaven and Hell, salvation and condemnation: If a man attain not the former, he cannot by any means escape the latter, and if he do not walk in the way to Heaven, he doth *ipso facto*, and without any further, poste swiftly forward to hell and condemnation; for, he proves they could not but perish and be condemned, because they refused to walk in the way wherein they might be saved, even *because they received not the love of the truth that they might be saved.*

Ver.

Ver. 11. *And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lye.*

He doth here further describe the vassals of Antichrists Kingdom, thirdly, from an higher degree of their sin. They would not only reject truth, but also *believe a lye*, that is, give a firm assent, without any contrary doubt, to grossest untruths and errours, as to the very truths of God. Which their sin is set forth from a necessary antecedent of it, the Lord his sending them strong delusion, *for this cause*, to wit, for their not receiving the love of the truth spoken of v. 10. where by *strong delusion* or (as the word doth signifie) efficacy of error and seduction, is not meant error it self, but the prevalency and pitch of error, so that when tentations to error should be propounded by Satan and his emissaries, they would undoubtedly prevail; and this efficacy of error is attributed to Gods sending, not as if the Lord did incite or perswade men to believe errours, for he forbids and condemns them, 2 Pet. 3. 17. but because he not only giveth loose reins unto Satan to use his power of seduction against them, 1 King. 22. 22. but also raineth snares upon them, and actively bringeth about many things in his providence, which being in themselves good, are yet stumbled on by them in their corruption, so, as they are thereby furthered to close with the temptation, Job 21. 7, &c. with 14. withholds his grace whereby they might resist tentations, 2 Chron. 32. 31. yea, and actually in his judgement withdraws,

372 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

draws, and after a sort extinguisheth that strength and light which he had formerly given, and they abused, *Marth.* 25. — 29. so that they cannot but succumb when they are tempted. *Doct.* 1. It is not inconsistent with the Lords holiness, but most agreeable to his unspotted justice, to punish sin with sin, by giving the sinner up, in the way mentioned in the exposition, to the slavery and tyranny of that sin wherein he so much delights; for, he saith, *for this cause*, to wit, for their former sin, *God shall send them strong delusion.* 2. As one degree of sin maketh way for an higher; So there cannot be a more terrible judgement inflicted upon any for former sin, than that he be given up of God to the power of it in time to come; a judgement so much the more dreadful, as the party smitten by it is not sensible of it; *Exod.* 7. 22, 23. for, this is the terrible judgement here denounced, *for this cause God shall send them strong delusion.* 3. That an errour, when it is vented, becometh mightily prevalent, in making many to close with it and embrace it, proceedeth not from the power of Satans tentations only, who hath not of himself an irresistible influence upon the minds of men, *Job* 1. 12. with 22. but also and mainly from mens own corruption and blindness, and the Lords judicial up-giving of them to it formerly mentioned, which holdeth by parity of reason in Satans tentations to any other sin; for, the efficacy of errour is here spoken of as a judgement sent by God; *God shall send them strong delusion.* 4. Where Gospel truths are not received in love and made use of as they ought, absurd and monstrous

strous errors will be ere long received, and believed for truths ; for, because they received not the love of the truth, they are given up of God to believe a lye. 5. When the Lord, in his holy justice, giveth loose reins unto Satan to tempt a sinner, and withdraweth from him his restraining grace, there is no sin so irrational or absurd to which the man so plagued of God will not run, if it were even to receive most gross absurdities for divine truths, and to believe them with a kind of firm assent beyond all doubt or suspicion ; for, their believing lyes is here foretold as the consequence of Gods sending them strong delusion, even that they should believe a lye.

Ver. 12. *That they all might be damned, who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness,*

He describeth the Antichrists followers, fourthly, from that judgement which followeth upon their sin, and is intended to be brought about by God as the end of his sending them strong delusion ; for, the context, shewing the result of this purpose from the former, implyeth so much ; and the judgement is, *they shall all be damned*, to wit, all guilty, in the way mentioned upon v. 10. of the former sins ; which, for further clearing of Gods justice, he doth here again repeat, 1. That which is spoken of v. 10. *their not believing the truth*, after they had heard it ; to wit, the truth of the Gospel, ( see the Gospel so called, and for what reasons upon Eph. 1. 13, doct. 4.) Next, that which is expressed

pressed v. 11. here called *their taking pleasure in unrighteousness*, that is, false and unrighteous doctrine ( see upon v. 10. ) to which they did not only give their assent and approbation, but also did find much inward satisfaction, and had an inexpressible delight and pleasure in it ( as the word signifieth ) and in all the woful consequences of unrighteousness both to God and man, to which it tended ; and therefore they should be without excuse, and dying impenitent, be damned without remedy. *Doct. 1.* Though some sins and errours be a necessary result of Gods judicial giving up a man to the power of temptation and delusion, as said is ; yet they cease not to be sin, obliging the guilty party to undergo eternal wrath, no less than any other sin ; and that because their former sins have justly procured that they should be so given up of God : and though God in his justice doth punish sin with sin ; yet the sinner doth alwayes delight in sin, as being the matter of his voluntary choice ; for, he shews they shall be damned for believing a lye, though the Lord being provoked, as said is, by their former sins, had sent them strong delusion, and that *because they took pleasure in unrighteousness*. *That they all might be damned*, saith he.

2. It is a manifest untruth that every man shall be saved in his own Religion, and that it is no hazard for a man to be of any Religion, if so he follow his conscience, believing what he thinks to be truth, and walk according to the principles of that Religion which he professeth and believeth to be of God ; for, here it is foretold that the devout followers of Antichristian lies, though they did believe

lieve them to be truths, yet, should be damned. *That they all might be damned.* 3. Multitudes of sinners concurring in one and the same guilt doth neither lessen the guilt nor make God either, through fear abate, or from pity moderate the deserved punishment ; for, here it is foretold that *they shall all be damned.* 4. That a man do savingly believe the Gospel, it is not sufficient that he assent to the truth of it in his judgement, but he must also embrace and receive the good things offered by it in his will and affections, and that from love to it ; for, that which he called the receiving of truth in love, v. 10. he calleth believing the truth here. *Who believed not the truth.* 5. As no men, no not the worst of men, become extreemly evil at first, but by certain steps ascend toward that height of sin at which they do at last arrive ; So when a man doth not only commit sin, but takes pleasure in it, maketh his boast of it, it speaks him at the very height of sin, and near a dreadful downfal in the pit of condemnation ; if Gods mercy by giving speedy repentance prevent it not ; for, several steps are here implied, their not *receiving truth*, their *believing untruth*, and the height of all, and nearest cause of their being damned, is, *their taking pleasure in unrighteousness.* 6. A man deluded with error may for a time find much seeming peace of conscience, quietness of spirit, soul-satisfaction and delight flowing from those erroneous doctrines which he believeth for truth : and the more of this kind a man doth find in the way of error, he is the more deluded, and his



### 376 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

his guilt the greater ; for, their *taking pleasure in unrighteousness*, or in unrighteous doctrine, is spoken of as the utmost effect of that strong delusion sent them, *v. 11.* and the highest step of their sin.

*A necessary Appendix containing the application of this Prophecy, and discovering who this Antichrist is.*

**H**AVING thus explained this dark Prophecie, and made such doctrinal application of it as every verse apart did offer; it now remaineth that for the more full understanding of the present Scripture, a discovery be made, who is this man of sin, that great Antichrist, whom the spirit of God doth here so fully describe; which the event, time, and experience, the surest commentaries for understanding dark prophecies, have now made so fully clear, that those who have eyes may see the truth of that assertion which hath been maintained almost in every age, and now by all the Reformed Divines. Whereby it is affirmed, That the Pope of *Rome*, ever since he usurped that fulness of power in all causes both humane and Divine which he hath now for a long time enjoyed, hath been, and yet is that man of sin, that Child of perdition, the very Antichrist here described; And that because all the characters of this man of sin, and every passage of this prophecie is verified in the Pope, as shall be made appear by taking a review of every verse.

And

378 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

And first, The third verse is verified in him ; for, first, the Church of *Rome*, whereof the Pope is head, hath made defection from the doctrine of faith, and purity of worship held forth in the Gospel, as appears from all the controverted points betwixt us and them ; which apostasie did spread it self over the face of the whole visible Church, even as the apostasie here foretold to be under the Antichrist, *except there come a falling away*, 2. The Pope did not pretend to such power over the Church of Christ, as he now exerciseth, in *Pauls* time. Their own Historians grant he claimed not the title of universal Bishop, nor power of both swords, and supream authority over general counsels, until some centuries of years were past. Even as the Antichrist of whom it is here foretold, he had not then revealed himself by exercising open tyranny over the Church of Christ. *And that man of sin be revealed*, saith he. 3. The Pope is a *man*, though not an individual person without succession, yet *de jure* alwayes but *one* at one and the same time, and a continued series and succession of men in one and the same Chair, driving forward one and the same design, even in that sense wherein I proved in the Exposition that the Antichrist is here called a man in the singular number. 4. The Pope is a *man of sin*, first, in his own person. It is almost incredible what monsters of men, for horrible crimes of murder, adultery, simony, forcery, incest, sodomy, even Popish Historians do relate many of their own Popes to have been. 2. In causing others to sin, in so far as he not only perswadeth and forceth men

men to Idolatry and superstition, under the name of commanded worship, as *Jeroboam* did, but also for money dispenseth in some cases with murder, fornication, incest, and selleth pardons for any sin unto those who have sufficient money wherewith to buy them. This is not denyed by themselves, even as the Antichrist who is here called the *man of sin*. Fifthly, The Pope is the *Son of perdition*: First, one who is destinate to destruction himself, as the Godless life and monstrous sins of many Popes have declared them to be, whatever the Lord may do in mercy to some, and those but very few particular Popes, whose lives have not been so grossly vicious as the rest, if so he have given them repentance for their abominable errours.

2. One who destroyeth others both in their souls by damnable doctrines, idolatries and superstitions, and in their bodies in so far as his cruel persecutions, upon men and women, for conscience have, for length of time, multitudes of those who have suffered by him, and the cruel manner of his persecuting, by exquisite tortures, bloody massacres, surpassed far all other persecutions, that ever were; Even as the Antichrist, who is here called in those same respects *the son of perdition*.

Secondly, whatever is affirmed of the Antichrist *v. 4.* is verified in the Pope: For, first, under pretence and colour of friendship, he is an eminent opposite and adversary to Christ, as in many other things, so, chiefly, in his threefold office. 1. In his Kingly office, while he destroyeth his subjects, dispenseth with his Laws, maketh them of none effect by his traditions, enacteth Laws of

his own, to bind the conscience, of equal authority with, yea and some of them point-blank opposite unto, the laws of Christ, as in his forbidding marriage to Church-men, discharging the use of the Cup at the Lords Supper. 2. In his Priestly office, while he maketh himself an high Priest under the new Testament, denyeth the tulous of Christs satisfaction and intercession, alledging that they must be supplied by the merits and intercession of the Virgin *Mary*, Saints and Angels, and teaching people to give them Religious worship for that end. 3. In his propheticall office, while he teacheth that the Scriptures are imperfect, and as a false Prophet doth teach contrary to what was taught by Christ, in the doctrine of merit, purgatory, indulgences, work of supererogation, &c. so that he opposeth Christ in all his offices, and this for a greater length of time, with more universal success, and more formidable force, than ever any heretick did before him; even as the Antichrist, who is here said *to oppose himself*. Secondly, The Pope exalts himself above all Kings and Emperours; while he teacheth he hath absolute power to dispose of Kingdoms and Empires to whom he will, at least in order to the Churches good, and actually hath dethroned Kings and other Magistrates, absolving their Subjects from their oath of allegiance; doth make the Emperour to hold his stirrup when he is to ride, and will have him to count it a favour to have access to kiss his feet, yea and sometimes hath trampled upon the Emperours neck, being humbly prostrate before him to beg his favour and reconciliation with him (all which

which are avowed and granted) Even as the Antichrist, of whom it is here said, *he exalteth himself above all that is called God, or is worshipped.* See the Exposition. Thirdly, The Pope, in managing his rule and government over the Church of God, pretendeth to no less than divine authority, even the same with God and Christ, whose great Vice-gerent and Vicar-general on earth he giveth out himself to be. Besides, it is expressly affirmed by Popish writers that the Pope sitting in and teaching from his Chair, cannot err, and his determinations are of equal certainty with the doctrine of Christ himself. Even as the Antichrist, of whom it is here said, that he shall carry himself *as God.* Fourthly, The Pope doth sit and exercise an absolute fixed and illimited power of Government over a society of men which once were Gods spiritual Temple and Church, and do yet bear that name, and are so in effect, if we speak of that small remnant which in all ages the Lord made to keep their garments clean from soul-ruining Antichristian errors, or if we speak of the whole bulk and body of them, not absolutely, but, as being compared with Turks; Jews and Heathens, in so far as they still retain some relicts of a Church, as the written word, Sacraments, Ordination, &c. though miserably corrupted by false glosses; a number of Superstitious, Idolatrous, and Antichristian additions; In which respects the Church and See of Rome may be called the Temple and Church of God, wherein the Pope doth sit and rule, even as it is here foretold of Antichrist; that he should *sit in the Temple of God.* Fifthly, The Pope attempts

382 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

to shew that he is in nothing less to be esteemed of than God, by taking and suffering to be ascribed unto himself, 1. Divine titles, as *our Lord God the Pope, universal Pastor, chief High-Priest, Head of the Catholick Church.* 2. Divine worship, as Prostration to him, Adoration of him, upon opinion of some transcendent sanctity in him, and that he hath fulness of power to forgive sins, bestow Heaven, and damn to Hell. 3. Divine properties, as that he cannot err, is the Judge of all men, and himself can be judged by no man, hath power, as Christs Vicar, to dispence with all Law, can forgive not only sins past, but for a lease of years yet to come; even as the Antichrist, of whom it is here foretold, he should *shew himself that he is God.*

Thirdly, Whatever is affirmed of the Antichrist, v. 6, 7. is verified also in the Pope: for, first, It was the Popes power, the growth whereof in Rome and Christendome was hindred by the Roman Empire, and which advanced by little and little towards its full height, as the credit, power and authority of that Empire did weaken and decay. The truth whereof is abundantly confirmed by History, and acknowledged by Papiests themselves. Even as it is here foretold that the credit and authority of the Roman Empire did for a long time retard the Antichrists growing greatness, and that the Antichrists power should rise upon the ruines of that Empire. *Ye know what withholdeth that he might be revealed, and he will lett untill he be taken out of the way.* See the Exposition. Secondly, A great many of Popish errors were already  
ready

ready hatched in the Apostles time, as that men are not justified by faith only, but also by works, *Gal. 2. 16.* that we must commend our selves to God by the Ministry of Angels, and for that end give them religious worship, *Col. 2. 18.* that we must abstain from certain kinds of meat, *Col. 2. 21.* and Church-men from marriage; that we ought to subject our selves to the wills of men in the use of things indifferent, *Col. 2. 20.* and that superiority of power in one Church-man over the rest is a thing convenient and desirable, *3 Joh. 9.* which, and such like Popish errours, did then work secretly and under ground, towards that height of credit and authority which they afterwards attained. Even as it is here shewn that the *mysterie* of Antichristian tyranny and doctrine did *work already* in Pauls time. Thirdly, popish errours, though most gross in themselves, yet are covered over with such fair pretences, that hardly can the poyson which lurketh in them be at first discerned, unity is pleaded for, as the foundation of their Hierarchy, a pretext is made of humility, for pressing the invocation of Saints and Angels, and of sending our suits by their mediation to God, Their doctrine of merit and justification by works, and not by faith only, is pressed as the only mean of exciting to diligence in duty, and especially in the works of charity, They press Pilgrimages, Penances, Abstinence from meats, voluntary poverty, vows to lead a single life, under the plausible pretexts of attaining thereby to more than ordinary sanctity, mortification of the flesh, and such like; Even as the Antichristian doctrine and



tyranny is here called a myſterie, *The myſterie of iniquity doth already work*: See the Expoſition. And Fourthly, Whatever Popiſh doctrine, as it is popiſh, pretend to, of more than ordinary ſanctity, yet the native iſſue and reſult of all in thoſe who do receive it, is nothing elſe but impiety and iniquity. Their vows of voluntary poverty do, in the nature of the thing, drive them to idleneſs, beggery, and to live upon the labours of others: vows of leading a ſingle life are accompanied with Fornications, Adulteries and all manner of uncleaneſs, in thoſe who have not the gift of continency. Their vows of blind and abſolute obedience to their ſuperiours do drive them to murder Kings, and perpetrate other moſt deſperate villanies, and to think they merit Heaven by ſo doing, if their ſuperiours do enjoyn them. Their ſtrictest Penances, Pilgrimages and Faſtings from certain meats, on certain dayes; their auricular Confeſſions, do caſt them looſe to live at a random in other things, as thinking they have already made ſatisfaction to God by thoſe things, and knowing how to make up with a little pains whatever yet is lacking, even as the Antichriſtian doctrine is here called *a myſterie of iniquity*.

Fourthly, Whatever is affirmed of the Antichriſt v. 8. is alſo verified in the Pope: for, firſt, it is maintained by his flattering followers, that he is above Law, taketh Law from none, and giveth Law unto all: that he may diſpence with Gods Law, and of wrong make right by correcting and changing the Law, Even as the Antichriſt who is here ſaid to be that wicked, or lawleſs one. 2. The Pope, after

after long wreſtling in the dark, hath at laſt, ſome hundreds of years ſince, attained to an incredible height of power in the whole Chriſtian world, by his being poſſeſſed with the power of both ſwords, but chiefly in the City and Territories of Rome, where he is abſolute Lord and Maſter, ever ſince the Roman Empire did loſe all intereſt in Europe, as Hiſtory doth make clear : Even as the Antichriſt is ſaid here to be revealed immediately after the weakning of the Roman Empire. *And then ſhall that wicked be revealed.* To which add, that ſeeing the Antichriſt muſt be already come, as I proved in *doct.* 1. from this verſe, what power is there, or hath been, to whom all his characters here and elſewhere mentioned do agree ſo well as to the Pope? 3. Since the firſt beginning of Reformation from Popery, the power and credit of the Pope hath been much waſted, and by little and little conſumed by the powerful Preaching of the Goſpel, through which his Errours, Tyranny, Superſtitious and Idolatry have been diſcovered to the world and openly diſavowed by the Reformed Churches : even as it is here foretold *that the Lord ſhall conſume Antichriſt by the breath of his mouth.* 4. However the power and credit of the Pope and of his erroneous doctrine be much weakned, yet ſo many and ſtrong are thoſe Engines which he employeth to defend his tottering Kingdom, and ſo ſmall ground hath been gained upon him theſe ſixty years laſt paſt, that there is little appearance he ſhall meet with a full and final overthrow in haſte, or before the time of Chriſts ſecond coming ; even as it is here foretold, there will be ſome-

what of Antichrist in the world until then, *which Christ shall destroy with the brightness of his coming.*

Lastly, Whatever is affirmed of Antichrist, v. 9, 10, 11, 12. is also verified in the Pope; for, first, Histories do testifie a great many Popes have cometo the Popedom by Sorcery and expresse covenanting with the Devil for that end, by Simony, by poysoning their Predecessours, or others who stood in their way, and by such other devilish arts, wherein, as in several other things, besides those, Satan hath been extreemly active to advance Popes and Popery; Even as it is here affirmed of Antichrist, *whose coming is after the working of Satan.* 2. A singular mean and help by which the Pope, and Popish doctrine, have come to credit and respect in the Christian world, is, signs and wonders alledged to be wrought by him, and his followers: this being their usual way, when other proofs do fail, to fly to miracles to confirm their superstitions and Idolatries, so that there is scarcely any famous Church, Image or statue, or Founder of any new Religious Order, or any Monastery or Religious place which is not famous by some one or other miracle, and some of them for many reported to be done by them, and in them, yea they make the glory of working Miracles a mark of the true Church: Even as it is here foretold of Antichrist, that his coming, credit and advancement, should be *with all power signes, and wonders.* Thirdly, Popish Miracles are all but false and lying wonders, given out and supposed only to be such, in so far as,

1. Some

1. Some of them are but meer Juglings and found to be such, as when they affirm their Images to have spoken, issued drops of blood, and sweat, that poor souls have come creeping and crying out of Purgatory, bemoaning their case, which have either been effectuated immediately by Satan, or by subtle conveyance and sleight of hand, which hath sometimes been discovered, and the spirit taken, whipt and laid in the stocks for his imposture. 2. Some of them have been truly done, but not true Miracles, as not exceeding the power of all natural causes, as when they affirm that some diseases have been cured by the touch of their superstitious Relicts; now how easie is it for Satan to take off and cure a disease, which, through Gods permission, he hath laid on? especially seeing many such like seemingly miraculous cures have been effectuated by devilish art among the Heathens. And 3. All of them are made use of to confirm their erroneous doctrines and superstitious practices, as their worshipping of Relicts, prayer for the dead, invocation of Saints, Purgatory, &c. and consequently all of them but false and seeming Miracles; even as it is here foretold of Antichrist, that *his coming should be — with signs and lying wonders*. Fourthly, The Popish doctrine, wherein it differs from the doctrine of the Reformed Churches, is nothing but an heap of untruths, driving the maintainers of it to impiety against God, in Idolatry, superstition, breach of vows, and perjuries, and to unrighteousness against man in unnaturality, disobedience to Parents, and lawful superiours, under religious pretexts, in preferring

ferring Fornication and Uncleanness to the bed undefiled in Marriage, in justifying Jesuitical equivocations, and speaking, yea and swearing untruths, and such like, which hath been abundantly made out by the Reformed Divines in their writings to that purpose: even as the doctrine of the Antichrist is here called *unrighteousness*, or a doctrine of untruths tending to unrighteousness and sin of all sorts. Fifthly, The Pope doth not avow or profess himself an enemy to truth and Christian Religion, but rather the prime pillar of it, even Christs Vicar on earth, the servant of the servants of Christ, by which and such like specious pretexts he hath undermined truth, and established error in its place: even as it is here foretold of the Antichrist that he should not openly avow his doctrine to be contrary to Gospel truth, but labour by deceitful tricks and fair pretexts to make the world believe his doctrine to be truth, *even by all the weakness of unrighteousness*. Sixthly, Innumerable almost are those subtle devices and deceiving juggings, which are made use of under Papacy to perswade the world to embrace their erroneous and unrighteous doctrine, such as, strong and false alledgances of their unity among themselves under one head, of the antiquity of their doctrine, the consent of Fathers to it, the universality of it, which is no more in effect but that all the world did once wonder after the Beast, *Rev. 13. 3.* Besides that their doctrine and worship is so framed, as to comply with mens corrupt Lusts, and to fit every humour. If men be lazy idlers, they place them in Monasteries, if ambitious

bitious or covetous, there are places of preferment  
 and profit to catch them ; if voluptuous and li-  
 centions, they may for a little money have par-  
 dons and dispensations, if quiet and cannot endure  
 the worlds trouble, there is a solitary life in some  
 Hermitage prepared for them : If a man dislike  
 his wife, let him enter Religious Orders, and he  
 is delivered from her ; If of a pragmatick stirring  
 disposition, there are employments of compassing  
 Sea and Land to gain a profelyte waiting for him.  
 There are flatteries, and taking allurements for  
 men of spirit, who will not be boasted, and boasts  
 and threats of curses and excommunications for  
 men of a more folding temper : In a word, what-  
 ever a mans humour can fancy, there is somewhat  
 in Popery to satisfy it, and make men believe of  
 themselves that they are singularly devout, when  
 they do but feed their carnal humours ; Even as  
 it is here foretold of the Antichrist that he should  
 come not with some, but, *all deceiveableness of*  
*unrighteousness.* Seventhly, Though the power  
 of the Pope, for many ages, was most dreadful  
 and absolute through all *Europe*, yet it was not  
 unlimited ; there being alwayes some in every age  
 ( as Papists themselves do sometimes confess and  
 History maketh clear ) who never yielded to take  
 on his yoke, but one way or other testified against  
 his Tyrannical Usurpation, and damnable soul-de-  
 stroying doctrine: even as it is here foretold that  
 some should be exempted from the Antichrists de-  
 fection, for he was only to prevail in *those who*  
*perish.* Eighthly, The members of the Popish  
 Church had in all ages the truth of the Gospel  
 tendred

tended to them, at the first beginning of the Popes apostasie and open tyranny more clearly, in following ages more darkly, what, by some, what they heard of Christs Nativity, Passion, Resurrection, &c. expounded to them, according to the custome, at their great Festivals, and what by the testimony or report of that testimony which dying Martyrs or other Confessours gave to truth, whereof there were some almost in every age; and yet they did not receive or believe the truth, especially those truths relating to the authority, sufficiency, and perfection of Scripture, to the fulness of Christs satisfaction and merit, and the compleat discharging of all his offices, the justification of sinners by the righteousness of Christ imputed to them and received by faith alone, and such other truths controverted betwixt them and us: yea neither believe they any truth because of the authority of God revealing it in Scripture, but because of the Popes Authority, which only makes Scripture to be Scripture, and worthy of credit unto them, and therefore cannot be said to believe any truth at all, seeing their faith is only humane, grounded upon the authority of man; even as it is here foretold of Antichrists followers, that *they received not the truth in love, when it was offered to them, and that they believed not the truth.* Ninthly, Hugely gross errors and superstitious fooleries are maintained by the Pope and his followers, for necessary truths, and acceptable pieces of Divine Worship, as may be seen in their Apish toyes, foolish gestures used at Mass, in their doctrine of Transubstantiation,

substantiation, and indulgences ; and such is their incorrigible obstinacy in these, against clear evidence of Scripture, yea and of common sense and reason, that it cannot be conceived rational men would be so infatuated and stupid, except they were judicially plagued of God, by giving them over to the power and prevalency of error and delusion, even as it is here affirmed of Antichrists followers, *that God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lye.* Tenthly, As Popish doctrine, wherein it differeth from us, is but a bundle of lies, which is abundantly proved by the Reformed Divines ; So this doctrine of lies is believed by the generality of the Popish Church as the very truth of God, with a firm assent and without all contrary doubt ; so that some of them being given over to the power of delusion will choose to dye for it, at least to suffer loss of goods before they recede from it ; Even as it is here foretold of Antichrists followers, *that God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lye.* Eleventhly, Many of the Popes deluded followers have their consciences so seared, that they rest their souls upon the faith of Popish errors, draw a kind of comfort and satisfaction from them, and have an infinite delight in the most fond and foolish of all their superstitious performances, as thinking they thereby do God good service : Even as it is here foretold of Antichrists followers *that they should have pleasure in unrighteousness,* or erroneous and unrighteous doctrine.

And



And now to shut up this second part of the Chapter, I may confidently resume the former assertion, as a clear conclusion from what is already said, that seeing all the characters of the man of sin, here described, are verified in the Pope of *Rome*, ever since he usurped the fulness of power in all causes both humane and Divine, which he hath now for a long time exercised, therefore he hath been, and yet is that *man of sin*, that *child of perdition*, and the very Antichrist, who is here described.

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Ver. 13. *But we are bound to give thanks alway to God for you, brethren, beloved of the Lord, because God hath from the beginning chosen you to salvation, through sanctification of the spirit, and belief of the truth.*

The Apostle, in the third part of the Chapter, doth comfort and confirm those believing *Thessalonians*, and in them all sincere believers through all Ages, against the terrour of the forementioned dreadful Prophecy; and this three wayes. The first, (which is propounded by way of thanksgiving to God, see *chap. 1. 3.*) is the certainty of their salvation, grounded upon Gods decree of their election, whereby he had *chosen them* (passing by others as the word implyeth) to the enjoying of salvation, or perfect blessedness in Heaven, *1 Pet. 1. 2, 4.* which decree of election is described from several things, which do all of them conduce to their confirmation and establishment.

1. From the cause moving God to it, implied in the word *beloved*, It was nothing without himself (see upon *Eph. 1. 4. doct. 7.*) but his love to them, which made him choose them.
2. From its antiquity, It was *from the beginning*, or, from eternity, as he explains himself, *Eph. 1. 4.*
3. From the means *through* which it is brought to execution, first, *sanctification* wrought in them by the *spirit* of God, mentioned before faith (though it be a fruit of faith, *Act. 15. 9.*) because it doth first appear to us. *James 2 — 18.* (See what this sanctification is, upon *1 Thes. 4. 3 —*)

2. *Belief*

394 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

2. *Belief* and faith (see what this grace is, *1 Thes.* 1. v. 3.) called *belief of the truth*, because it hath respect unto, and relyeth upon the truth, chiefly of the Gospel, *Mark* 1. 15. in which Christ is offered, *1 Tim.* 3. 16. *Doct.* 1. As the truly Godly, beloved of God, do most suspect their own strength, and are most afraid of their own weakness, upon hearing of approaching tryals, when the unrenewed fool rageth and is confident, *Prov.* 14. 16. So it is the duty of Christs Ministers to provide the Lords people with suitable and seasonable grounds of consolation from the word of truth to underprop them, lest their suspicions and fears do end in heartless fainting and discouragement; for, *Paul* foreseeing that the Godly would be most afraid at the terrour of the former Prophecy, doth set himself to comfort and confirm them, *But we are bound, &c.* 2. It is the duty of those who have obtained mercy from the Lord, so to look upon the dreadful Judgements, Spiritual or Temporal, which are inflicted by God upon others, as that they may therein read, and thankfully acknowledge their own obligation unto the Lord who dealeth otherwayes with them; for, *Paul*, being to mention the preservation of those believing *Thessalonians* from the dreadful judgements formerly spoken of, will not do it but by way of thanksgiving to God, that therein they may see their own duty. *But we are bound to give thanks to God alway for you.* 3. The more of sanctifying grace, and of other testimonies of Gods special love, is bestowed upon a people, the greater obligation is thereby laid upon their faithful Pastors to bless the Lord on their

their behalf; for, *Paul* ſeeth himſelf bound to give thanks to God, becauſe God had *choſen* them, &c. See more upon this ground, *chap. 1. 3.* But, 4. The more a man is beloved of God, he will be the more afraid of Antichriſts apoſtaſie, and may the more confidently expect that he ſhall be preſerved from it; for, they were *beloved*, whom *Paul* ſuppones here to be moſt afraid, and whom he here confirms, and partly from this that they were *beloved* of the Lord. 5. As the elect are above the peril of total and final apoſtaſie; So the ground and reaſon of their preſervation from it is not in themſelves, in the ſtrength or firmneſs of their reſolutions, but in the Lords unchangeable decree, whereby he hath choſen them to eternal life. This is that foundation of the Lord which ſtandeth ſure, *2 Tim. 2. 19.* and therefore they cannot ſo fall as to periſh; for, he confirms them againſt the fears of falling away, from their election. *Be- cauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation.* 6. It is the Lords allowance that the Godly elect ſhould ſtudy to make their election ſure, and attain to the aſſurance of it, as that which proveth a powerful preſervative, as againſt other ſins, *2 Pet. 1. 10.* ſo, chiefly, againſt Antichriſtian errors; for if they do not attain to the knowledge of their election, how can they draw comfort and matter of confirmation from it, as the Lord alloweth them to do here? *becauſe God hath from the beginning choſen you to ſalvation.* 7. As Gods decree of election before time, is accompanied with the fruits of ſaving grace in the elect, begotten in them by the ſpirit of God in time;

So it is neither possible, nor yet needful, for attaining the knowledge of our election, to dive into the depth of Gods eternal decree about us, at the first step, but we are to search and try, if those fruits and effects of Gods electing love, be yet wrought in us, and from these conclude that we are elected; for, the Apostle speaks of faith and sanctification as the fruits of election, by which, and by effectual calling mentioned v. 14. a man may gather he is elected: *he hath chosen us through sanctification and belief.* 8. As the Lord will infallibly bestow salvation upon the elect, because he hath chosen them to it, and the counsel of the Lord must stand, *Prov. 19. 21.* So he bestoweth salvation upon none who are destitute of faith and sanctification, the means appointed of God for leading to it; *he hath chosen you to salvation,* saith he; *through sanctification and belief.* 9. Whomsoever God hath elected to salvation, he hath also, in that same decree, elected them to faith and sanctification, and therefore the foresight of those was not a motive inducing God to elect one more than another; they were good things decreed to be given unto us, and consequently were not foreseen to be in us before he decreed them for us: *for, he hath chosen you to salvation through sanctification and belief.* 10. As faith and sanctification go alwayes together, the former being the fountain of the latter, and the latter again an evidence of the former, *Gal. 5 — 6.* So the motions of Gods sanctifying spirit are alwayes conform to Gods revealed truth, and directed by truth as it is apprehended by faith; and all other motions

ations which are not such, are not of God, whatever they pretend to, *Isa. 8. 20.* for, he joynes sanctification of the spirit and belief of the truth together.

Ver. 14. *Whereunto he called you by our Gospel, to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

For their further comfort and confirmation from the former ground, he doth here give an evidence that God had chosen them to salvation; even this that God had effectually called them, or having renewed their wills (*Ezek. 26. 27.*) had by his omnipotent power, (*Phil. 6. 44, 45.*) made them willingly apply themselves (*Psal. 110. 3.*) to the attaining of those things *whereunto* they were called, to wit, salvation, sanctification and faith mentioned *v. 13.* to which the first word of this verse doth relate. Which effectual calling is set forth. 1. From the external mean, by which it had been brought about, to wit, the Preaching of the Gospel called *Pauls Gospel*, because he was entrusted with the dispensing of it to them, *1 Thes. 2. 4.* next, from the utmost end of their calling; to wit, their *obtaining* that *glory* in Heaven, which the *Lord Christ* hath purchased, and the same, in some respect, for kind, though not for measure, with that which he himself enjoyeth, *Phil. 3. 21, 1 Cor. 6. 2, 3.* *Doct. 1.* A man can draw no comfort or confirmation from Gods decree of electing him to salvation through sanctification and faith, except he actually apply himself to walk in the

398 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

way which leadeth to salvation ; for, he makes the strength of the former consolation and confirmation lye in this, that they were effectually called to sanctification, and consequently had betaken themselves to walk in that way, *whereunto he called you.* 2. It is not in the power of fallen man to do so much of himself, though Heaven be offered and the way chalked out, which leadeth to it, as to betake himself to walk in it, except the Lord encline him powerfully so to do, and by his omnipotent arm draw him that so he may run after him ; *Cant. 1. 4* ——— for, he saith it was the *Lord, who called them thereunto.* 3. However this effectual excitation of sinners, and engaging them to enter the way of salvation, be the work of God alone ; yet he maketh use of the Gospel Preached by his sent Ministers, as an outward mean, at or after the Preaching whereof he ordinarily doth work powerfully in the hearts of the elect : for, he saith, *whereunto he called you by our Gospel.* 4. As the state of salvation, to which the elect are chosen, is altogether glorious, comprising what eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor ever entred into the heart of man to think upon, *1 Cor. 2. 9.* So the glory to be enjoyed in that state, is the result, not of our endeavours or merit, but of Christs purchase, and a piece of that glory which Christ in his humane nature enjoyeth, who hath gone to Heaven for this very end, that where he is there we may be ; *Joh. 14. 3.* for, therefore is it called *the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ* to the obtaining whereof we are called. 5. Though Heaven and glory be purchased by Christ and de-  
signed

ſigned for the elect in Gods eternal and unchangeable decree, ( ſee v. 13. ) yet none attaineth to the actual poſſeſſion of it, but ſuch as are effectually called and drawn out of nature to the ſtate of grace, and all ſuch ſhall at laſt attain it, grace here being a moſt infallible forerunner of glory hereafter : for, he ſaith he hath called you to the obtaining of glory.

Ver. 15. *Therefore, brethren, ſtand faſt, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our Epistle.*

He confirms them, Secondly, by exhorting them that *therefore*, to wit, becauſe there was an apoſtaſie to be v. — 3. and Gods electing love was made known unto them, v. 13, 14. that therefore, I ſay, they would ſtand faſt and conſtant in the truth without yielding ground as ſtout ſouldiers, ( from whom the word is borrowed ) which he further explaineth by exhorting them to hold, as it were by both hands, and againſt all oppoſition, *the traditions*, or things delivered by him ( as the word ſignifieth ) to wit, the exhortations and doctrines both concerning faith and manners, which they had received from him and were taught by him, *whether by word*, when he was preſent with them and preached to them, or by this and the former *Epistle* written by him, when he was abſent from them. Doct. 1. The doctrine of election, and aſſurance of ſalvation grounded upon election, doth not make exhortations to duty, reproofs and threatenings in caſe of neglect of duty, of no effect and



400 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

useless ; In so far as those are means appointed by God for making the elect persevere in the way which leadeth unto that salvation, to which they are appointed : for, notwithstanding of what he wrote of election and the infallible evidence of their election, *v. 13, 14.* he doth here exhort them to *stand fast and hold the traditions.* 2. As the dreadful-ness of approaching hazard should not makes us lose heart, and sit down discouraged ; So the faith of through-bearing, flowing from assurance of our election, is so far from being, in its own nature, a pillow for carnal security, that, upon the contrary, it doth forcibly encourage and excite to duty in the face of danger, as knowing our labour shall not be in vain in the Lord ; for, from what he spoke of the future apostasie, and the evidence they had of Gods electing love, he exhorts them *therefore brethren, stand fast, and hold.* 3. Even the elect themselves have been and will be strongly assaulted by Antichrist, and in no small hazard to be drawn away with his Antichristian errours, except they stand fast as men of courage, and employ the uttermost of their wit and strength to defend the truth of the Gospel against those dreadful terrours and subtle snares, which Antichrist and his emissaries do make use of to drive them and draw them from it : for, so much is implied, while, speaking to the elect with relation to the assaults of Antichrist, he exhorts them to stand as stout souldiers, and to hold the truth as it were with both hands against all opposition, as the word signifieth, *therefore, brethren, stand fast and hold.* 4. The apostasie of many from the truth, and the prevalency of

of error, is ſo far from being, in reaſon, a motive to make us think the leſs of truth, and to follow the drove, that it ought to make us love truth the better, cleave to it more firmly, and become more rooted in the faith of it, that ſo the ſtorm, which bloweth others up by the roots, may not unſettle us; for, from what he ſpoke of a general apoſtaſie to come, he exhorts them that *therefore they would ſtand faſt and hold the traditions.*

5. There is no ground here to eſtabliſh the authority of Popiſh unwritten traditions, as a partial rule of faith and manners, of equal authority with the written Word of God: for, though ſome of thoſe traditions here mentioned were not written by *Paul* in any of theſe two Epiſtles; yet they, as all other truths neceſſary to ſalvation, were committed either before or after this to ſacred writ, *2 Tim. 3. 15, 17. traditions which ye have been taught whether by word or our Epiſtle.*

Ver. 16. *Now our Lord Jeſus Chriſt himſelf, and God even our Father, which hath loved us, and hath given us everlaſting conſolation, and good hope through grace.*

He confirms them thirdly, by praying to God for them that he would work thoſe things in them which he was preſſing upon them; to wit, comfort and conſtancy. In which prayer, he, firſt, layeth down ſome arguments for ſtrengthening both his own, and their confidence in expectation of an answer. The firſt is taken from that near relation wherein Chriſt and God, to whom he prayeth,

402 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*  
did stand towards them. *Christ himself being their Lord Jesus Christ, and God their Father.* The second from Gods special love to them. The third from the fruits of his love already enjoyed, 1. Consolation, that is ease of mind from, and encouragement of spirit against all causes of sorrow; which is actually attained by real believers at some times, *Psal. 27. 1, 2.* and all such have sufficient grounds and reason for it alwayes, *Heb. 3. 17, 18.* and the meanest measure of it enjoyed by any here is an earnest of that full and perfect freedom and ease from all sorrows and weights of sin and misery which they shall enjoy in Heaven for ever; *Job. 4. 14.* and therefore is it called *everlasting consolation.* 2. *Good hope*, that is, both solid grounds of hope, and the grace of hope it self whereby we make use of those grounds, by expecting all the good things which God hath promised, *Rom. 8. 25.* which two fruits of love are described from their common fountain, Gods grace and favour, not only without, but contrary to our deserving, *Isa. 64. 6.* *Doct. 1.* That precepts and exhortations to duty do not inferr a power in mans free-will to obey, see upon *1 Thes. 5. 23.* *doct. 2.* For, he here prayeth that God would work that in them which he hath presently pressed upon them. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.* 2. As it is the Lords blessing and powerful working of his spirit which maketh the word Preached, gain ground on hearts, *1 Cor. 3. 7.* So it is the duty of Ministers, and of people also, to deal with God in earnest by Prayer for his promised spirit to accompany the Word Preached and make it lively, seeing the Lord hath undertaken

undertaken to give his holy spirit unto those who ask him; *Luk. 11. 13.* for, *Paul*, having pressed comfort and constancy, doth pray to God that he would *comfort and establish* them, and thereby teacheth them to do the like. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.* 3. That a man may stand fast, especially in trying times, there is more required than conviction of duty, or a fixed resolution to stand to his duty, *Matth. 26. 33, 35.* There must be also a continued influence from the Lord, of cheerfulness, comfort and courage, otherwise all will be to little purpose; for, *Paul* seeth this necessary, and therefore prayeth for it, *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.* 4. That Jesus Christ is true God equal with the Father appeareth from this, that not only he is one who heareth prayer, the author and bestower of all spiritual blessings which are here sought from him, and said to be already bestowed by him, but also he is named before the Father, which certainly had been blasphemous if he were not also true God. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God even our Father, &c.* 5. That Christ is a distinct person from the Father, though one in substance with him, appears from this, that they are here distinguished by *Paul*, *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father.* 6. That God the Father is usually named before the Son doth not infer any inequality betwixt them, but only the order of subsistence and working which is among the persons of the blessed Trinity; for, here Christ the second person is named first, to shew there is not any such inequality.

*Now*

*Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God even our Father.* 7. That our prayers should be directed unto God only, see upon *Eph. 1. 17. doct. 3.* for, so doth *Paul* alwayes direct his. *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, &c.* 8. Our prayers to God should not consist of multiplyed petitions only, but ought to be fraughted with such arguments and motives for obtaining what we ask, as may strengthen our confidence in expectation of an answer; for, such are the Apostles prayers. *Now our Lord ——— which hath loved us, and given us, &c.* 9. In seeking things needful from God, we should look upon him, not as standing disaffected to us, and at a distance with us, but according to the nearest relations, which we can reckon our selves to have unto him; for, *Paul* eyeth Christ and God as his and their Christ and Father. *Now our Lord, and God even our Father.* 10. The Faith of Gods special love doth strongly underprop the heart with confidence of a gracious answer in prayer, as knowing that love in God is communicative of any thing in God that is good and needful for the party loved, *Psal. 84. 11.* and that seeing his love hath given Christ, which is more, he will not withhold that which is less; *Rom. 8. 32.* for, *Paul* doth strengthen his confidence from this ground, while he saith, *which hath loved us.* 11. Our former receipts from God should be improved as helps and props for strengthening confidence in expectation of obtaining yet further from him, even whatever our necessities call for, and his glory shall require at our hand: This being the Lords usual way to do good because

becauſe he hath done good ; and therefore prayer ſhould not be wholly ſtuffed with heartleſs complaints of what we want, there ſhould be a mixture of humble and thankful acknowledgement alſo of what we already have, and an argument drawn from thence to plead for more ; for, ſo doth *Paul* here. *Who hath given us everlaſting conſolation and good hope.* 12. It is only ſpiritual receipts the experience whereof doth alone, and conſidered apart from receipts of any other kind, furniſh us thus with an argument whereby to plead with God for more, thoſe only being given as an earneſt of further, *Eph.* 1. 14. which temporal favours are not, but ſometimes given of God in diſpleaſure, and fore-runners of his eternal wrath : *Pſal.* 17. 14. for, it's only ſpiritual receipts from which *Paul* doth draw an argument here. *Who hath given us everlaſting conſolation, and good hope.* 13. True and ſolid conſolation againſt any thing which cauſeth grief is only that, which is accompanied with, and floweth from the well-grounded and good hope of eternal glory : and whatever other comfort or joy a man enjoyeth, it is not laſting, much leſs everlaſting, but endeth in greater grief ; *Eccleſ.* 7. 6. for, he conjoyneth theſe two, *everlaſting conſolation and good hope.* 14. Then doth experience of by-paſt receipts ſtrengthen much our confidence of receiving more, when we take up Gods free grace and favour without and contrary to our deſerving as the cauſe of what hath been beſtowed already ; In ſo far as hereby we find an answer to all thoſe doubts, which do ariſe from our preſent unworthineſs,

thiness, and undeservings, even this, The same free grace which overcame our mis-deservings then, will overcome them yet ; for, *Paul*, while he makes by-past receipts plead for obtaining further, doth look on them as flowing from this fountain. *Who hath given us everlasting consolation, and good hope through grace.*

Ver. 17. *Comfort your hearts, and stablish you in every good word and work.*

Next, in this prayer is set down what he prayed for ; first, the continuance and increase of the same comfort, which they had already received, *v. 16.* next, *establishment*, and constancy ; and this, first, *in every good word*, that is, in the faith of good and sound doctrine, opposite to Antichristian error, *1 Tim. 4. 6.* which agreeth better with the preceding purpose of the whole Chapter, than to expone it of their language and discourse. Next, *in every good work*, or the practice of holiness in the whole course of their life. See what a good work is upon *Eph. 2. 10. doct. 4.* Hence learn, *1.* That a man may stand stedfast in a trying time, he should by all means endeavour to keep his heart in a cheerful frame, by laying hold, with some measure of confidence, upon such grounds of consolation as the Gospel affords, *1 Thes. 4. 18.* habitual discouragement and dejectedness of mind being the usual forerunner of defection, *Heb. 12. 12, 13.* for, the Apostles praying that *God would comfort and establish them*, shews that a heart cheered up with the consolations of the Gospel is the

the usual companion of constancy. 2. Not only are the first beginnings of grace from God, but also the daily increase and progress of grace in every degree and step, from the lowest to the highest; for, having shewn v. 16. that God had given them the beginnings of consolation, he here prayeth for the increase of it: *comfort your hearts*, saith he. 3. Stability in the faith of true doctrine and in the practice of an holy life do mutually contribute, one to another: and error in the point of truth is usually accompanied with some deviation in practice from the rule of an holy life: and profanity of life doth of it self cast men loose to the embracing of such errors as may gratifie their unmortified lusts, 2 Tim. 4. 3. for, he prayeth that God would *stablish them in every good word and work*, jointly.

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## CHAP. III.



**I**N the first part of this Chapter, the Apostle doth press upon them four several exhortations to their duty. In the first whereof he exhorts them to pray for himself, and other faithful Ministers, and that, first, for the progress of the Gospel committed to them, *v. 1.* next, for the preservation of their persons, *v. 2.* To which he subjoineth a seasonable comfort against their fear, *v. 3.* In the second, he exhorts them unto obedience to his doctrine in general, *v. 4.* in the third, to the love of God and patience in special, *v. 5.* In the fourth, he chargeth them to censure disorderly walkers, or idle loiterers, and to abstain from intimate fellowship with them; which charge is propounded, first, more generally, *v. 6.* and accordingly prosecuted, to *v. 11.* while he condemns their disorderly practice, first, because it was contrary to his own example, *v. 7.* who laboured hard among them besides his publick preaching, *v. 8.* that he might cast them a copy not to live idly, *v. 9.* Secondly, It was contrary to his doctrine also, *v. 10.* Next, he prosecutes this charge more particularly, to *v. 16.* while he, first, describes those disorderly walkers from two of their properties, Idleness and turbulent curiosity, *v. 11.* next, he doth command them to quit both those vices, *v. 12.* and thirdly, speaketh to those  
who

who walked orderly, firſt, exhorting them not to grow remiſs in well-doing, notwithstanding of their many diſcouragements, v. 13. Next, preſcribing unto them how to cenſure delinquents by excommunication, v. 14. and how to uſe moderation towards the party cenſured, v. 15.

In the ſecond part of the Chapter he concludeth the Epiſtle, firſt, by praying for peace and Gods preſence to them, v. 16. next, with his uſual farewell-wiſh, v. 18. Having firſt ſhewn for what uſe he did alwayes write that part of his Epiſtles with his own hand, v. 17.

Ver. 1. **F**inally brethren, pray for us, that the word of the Lord may have free courſe, and be glorified even as it is with you.

The Apoſtle having made a tranſition from the preceding doctrine by the word *finally* (implying as the Original beareth, there did ſomewhat yet remain neceſſary to be added) doth enter the firſt of his exhortations; wherein he beſeecheth them lovingly as *brethren* to pray for him and his colleagues, and conſequently for all other faithful Miniſters. Particulars to be prayed for are two: The firſt is in this verſe, and hath reſpect unto the Goſpel, here called the *word of the Lord* (See upon *Phil. 1. 14. doct. 1.*) which is entruſted to Miniſters, 1 *Theſ. 2. 4.* and concerning it, they were to pray, firſt, that it might have free courſe, or (as it is in the Original) might run, that is, be ſpeedily propagated far and near, and all

410 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

all things removed out of the way which might hinder its course. Next, that it might be *glorified*, even as it was with those *Thessalonians*, that is, not only be mightily prevalent in converting many to God, whereby the glorious power of God working by it should be seen and acknowledged, *1 Cor.* 14. 25. but also the profession of the Gospel might be adorned with the answerable fruits of an holy life in those who hear it, which brings no small glory and credit to the Gospel, *Tit.* 2. 10. as the profane life of professors doth dishonour it, *2 Pet.* 2. 2. *Doct.* 1. See a Doctrine from the word, *finally*, or *furthermore*, upon *1 Thes.* 4. v. 1. *doct.* 4. *finally, brethren.* 2. Most eminent Christians for gifts and graces are usually most sensible of their own wants, and so far from undervaluing others, being compared with themselves, that they highly prize what worth is in them, and can pleasantly stoop to receive some spiritual benefit and advantage from them; for, though *Paul* did exceed them all in spiritual induements, yet he most affectionately seeketh the help of their prayers. *Finally, brethren, pray for us.* 3. Ministers should so lay out and employ what stock of gifts and graces they already have for the good of the Lords people, as that they jointly endeavour by all means, of Reading, Meditation, *1 Tim.* 4. 13, 15 — and of prayer by themselves, *2 Cor.* 7. 5. and of others, to acquire a new supply of strength and furniture for enabling them to their work; lest otherwise they run dry, and have little or nothing to say unto any good purpose, *1 Tim.* 4. 15. for, *Paul* having instructed them, and prayed for them in the

the former part of this Epistle, doth now beseech them to deal with God for a new recruit of furniture for him. *Pray for us.* 4. As it is the duty of Christian brethren mutually to pray for, and to require the performance of this duty from one another : So the most effectual way for engaging others to pray for us, is to make them know we pray for them, and that we esteem of them as such whose prayers are somewhat worth ; for, *Paul* being to crave the help of their prayers, did shew, *chap. 2. v. 16.* that he prayed for them, and doth here shew he esteemed them as *brethren*, that hereby he may engage them. *Brethren pray for us.* 5. The great care of a faithful Minister, and that which lyeth nearest to his heart, and which of any other thing he recommendeth most to the care of others, is, not so much his own personal respect or preservation from hazard, as the success and thriving of the Gospel by the blessing of God upon his pains, and the pains of others ; for, this is it he recommends unto them to be prayed for in the first place, and the care of his own person but in the second. *Pray for us*, saith he, *that the word of the Lord may have free course.* 6. It is the duty of the Lords people and servants not only to give the Gospel countenance and entertainment where it already is, but also to have enlarged desires, seconded with the utmost of orderly endeavours, for the spreading and propagation of the Gospel unto those places where it is not ; for, this is it that *Paul* would have them to pray for here, even *that the word of the Lord may have free course.* 7. So great and many are those obstructions cast in

412 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

by the Devil and men in the way of the Gospels progress, *Act. 10* 23. that no humane endeavours, nor any thing else except the omnipotent power of God, can fully remove them; for, he seeth a necessity of prayer to God, *that the word of the Lord may have free course.* 8. It is the duty of Ministers and people not only to endeavour that the Gospel may run through the tongues and ears of many, and outward subjection be rendred to it, but also that it be received in hearts, and that so much be testified by the holy life and conversation of those who do receive it: Neither are they to rest satisfied with the former without some promising evidences of the latter: for, he will have them to pray not only that the Gospel may have free course, but also that it *may be glorified.* See the Exposition. 9. That the word of the Lord hath prevailed mightily with our selves, and carryed us captive to the obedience of it, *should* serve us both as an incitement to deal with God in behalf of others, that they may be gained in like manner, seeing grace is not envious, *1 Cor. 13.* — 4 — and for a ground of hope that our labour of that sort shall not be in vain in the Lord: for, that he may incite them to pray for others with confidence, he minds them how the Gospel had prevailed with themselves, *even as it is with you,* saith he.

Ver.

Ver. 2. *And that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men: for all men have not faith.*

Here is, first, the second particular to be prayed for, and it respecteth the person of *Paul*, and of other faithful Ministers, concerning whom they were to pray that they *might be preserved and delivered* (to wit, so long as God had any work for them, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26.) from the cruelty and snares both of open and secret enemies, who are here called, first, *unreasonable*, that is, men demented, whom no reason could satisfie, or (as the greek word implyeth) *men of no abode*, possibly the vagrant Jews, or men unworthy to have any place or respect among men. Next, *wicked*, that is, men of a vicious life; or, more particularly (as the original also implyeth) men desirous of trouble, and procuring trouble to others. Secondly, he gives a reason why this petition for their delivery and preservation was necessary, and also hints at the cause of mens absurdity and wickedness presently spoken of; to wit, because many, even of those within the visible Church, had not the grace of saving faith; and leaveth it unto them to gather that no good was to be expected from such to Christs faithful Ministers: *Doct. 1.* Not only the Gospel which Ministers do carry, but also the persons of Ministers for the Gospels sake, should be respected and cared for, both by themselves, and by the Lords people of their charge. Those earthen vessels should be regarded because of the precious liquor

414 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

contained in them; for, *Paul* having recommended unto them to pray for the spreading of the Gospel in the first place, doth now enjoin them to pray for the preservation of his person and of other faithful Ministers in the next. *And that we may be delivered*, saith he. 2. As faithful Ministers may alwayes look to meet with opposition: So they who oppose them most, and the work of God in their hands, are usually men of turbulent spirits, unreasonable carriage, and for one bad property or other somewhat infamous, even such as *Pauls* opposites here spoken of, *that we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men*. 3. Wherever a spirit of opposition against the publick Ministry doth enter, it turneth malapert and shameless, so that no eminency of parts, of place, or unblameableness of life in Christs Ministers, can prove a sufficient sanctuary to shelter them from it: for, *Paul* was eminent for all those, and yet those absurd and shameless men did create trouble and hazard to him, *That we may be delivered from unreasonable and wicked men*. 4. The visible Church hath alwayes in it a mixed multitude of good and bad, wheat and tares, *Matth.* 13. 24. neither have the labours of the most eminent Ministers, been ever, for what appeareth, so far blessed of God, as to be the means of conveying saving grace unto all who heard them; for, he sheweth that even in that time when the Apostles were Preachers, *all men had not faith*, and this must be understood of men in the visible Church, for they knew sufficiently that all others who were without the Church had it not. 5. As the grace of saving faith doth powerfully restrain a

mans turbulent, sensual and irrational affections; So any other restraint, where this is wanting, will prove but weak to keep them at under, if a suitable temptation be once presented; for, he makes their want of faith the cause of their unreasonable, turbulent and wicked carriage: *for all men have not faith*, faith he. 6. As the grace of faith is not bestowed by God upon all who hear the Gospel, but upon some only, even the elect, *Act. 13.* — 48. so it is a speaking evidence that such have no faith who prove shameless, absurd and turbulent in their opposition to faithful Ministers, and to the work of God in their hands: for, he maketh their opposition flow from their want of faith: *for all men have not faith*, faith he.

Ver. 3. *But the Lord is faithful, who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil.*

The Apostle doth here encourage them against their fear of falling from truth, which he foresaw would readily arise from what he presently spoke, of the many open and secret enemies to truth, and to the sincere Preachers and professors thereof; as appeareth from the adversative particle *But*: and he encourageth them by assuring them that God would, first, *stablish* or confirm them in good, so as they should not totally nor finally fall from it, 1 *Joh. 3. 9.* 2. Most carefully *keep* them, as a prison is kept (as the word implyeth) *from evil*, that is, from Satan that evil one, together with all his evil and mischievous devices, even every evil work, 2 *Tim. 4. 18.* to wit, so as sin should not



416 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

have dominion over them, *Rom. 6. 14.* The truth of all which is confirmed from this that *God is faithful*, one who may be trusted, and will perform whatever he hath promised, where he supponeth that God hath promised never to leave them, who have once sincerely closed with him, according to *Joh. 10. — 28.* and therefore his faithfulness must be engaged to establish and keep them. *Doct. 1.* As the truly Godly, upon the apprehension of any pinching hazard, are of all men aptest to be discouraged with thoughts of their own weakness, *1 Sam. 27. 1.* So it is the duty of every faithful Minister carefully to foresee what may prove discouraging to any such, and tenderly guard against it: yea such should be his tenderness in this, that their hazard should make him in a manner forget his own: for, though the rage of enemies was mainly bent against *Pauls* own person, yet he is more taken up how to guard against the discouragement of the Lords people, which he foresaw would arise from it, than to provide for his own safety. *But the Lord is faithful*, saith he, *who will stablish you.* 2. Then doth a Minister wisely guard and underprop the Lords people against discouragements arising from their own apprehended weakness, when he doth not labour to possess them with the contrary thoughts of their own strength, which indeed is none, *2 Cor. 3. 5.* but rather confirming whatever thoughts they have of that kind, he doth fasten them upon the power and faithfulness of God for their support; for, so doth *Paul* here, *But the Lord is faithful*, saith he, *who will stablish you.* 3. That Gods fidelity is impledged for the performance

performance of his promises, See upon 1 *Thes.* 5. v. 24. doct. 5. for *God is faithful.* 4. The final perseverance of believers in good, and their preservation from evil in the extent mentioned in the exposition, is absolutely promised, and most undoubtedly shall be performed: for, the impludging of Gods faithfulness for it, implyeth that it is a thing promised. *But God is faithful who shall stablish you, &c.* 5. The infallible perseverance of the Saints in good, and their preservation from evil, doth not flow from the nature of grace in it self, which is but a created quality, and may be crushed if there were not some external help to underprop it, *Rev.* 3. 2. nor yet from any fixedness of their own resolutions, which are in themselves but changeable, *Jer.* 20. 9. but from the power of God who standeth engaged to bear them through against all opposition in the contrary. *But God is faithful, saith he, who will stablish you.*

Ver. 4. *And we have confidence in the Lord touching you, that ye both do and will do the things which we command you.*

Here is his second exhortation wherein he doth most effectually, though indirectly, incite them to obey the doctrine delivered by him in general, as the rule of their life and conversation, while he professeth his charitable confidence, grounded upon the Lord and his grace, of their present and future obedience to what he had commanded them in the name and authority of Jesus Christ, as the word in the original doth imply. See upon 1 *Thes.* 4. v. 2.

# 418 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

Understand him here to speak, 1. Of the present obedience of the most part, as to the main of his injunctions, though in some things they were defective, as appeareth from *v. 6, &c.* and, 2. Of the fewer, though better part, as to all his injunctions in general. And, 3. Of them all as to their future obedience, whereof he was charitably confident, though for the present, as said is, they were in some things blame-worthy. *Doct. 1.* It is the duty of Ministers towards the Lords people of their charge, and of all Christians mutually towards one another, charitably to believe and hope the best of their inward good condition and perseverance in it, where there are any probable, though not infallible, evidence; for charity thinks no evil, *1 Cor. 13. -- 5.* Thus *Paul* had confidence that they both did and would do, *&c.* 2. We ought to ground our charitable confidence of peoples perseverance in well-doing, not in themselves whatever be their present goodness ( for all men are weak, *Mat. 26. 41.* and lyars, *Rom. 3. 4.* ) but in the Lord, who alone can powerfully encline their hearts to good and preserve them in it; for, *Paul* had confidence, not in them, but *in the Lord* concerning them. 3. It is a singular piece of ministerial prudence for a Minister, in some cases, and when he hath to do with some people, especially those in whom he seeth any appearance of good, & yet an aptness not to be discouraged with the bad thoughts which discerning gracious men may have concerning them, to point out to such their duty, and to incite them to it, rather by shewing his charitable thoughts of their present and future obedience, than by a rigid pressing of their

their duty on them, joined with an upbraiding of them for some present neglects, and his professed diffidence of their amendment in time coming; for, *Paul* incites them to obedience by professing the confidence he had of them. *And we have confidence that ye both do and will do.* 4. It is the duty of people to improve what place they have in the charity of faithful Ministers, or discerning Christians, as a spur to incite them to further diligence, and to walk answerable to that esteem which others have of them, and not to rest upon it, as if having it they had enough; for, *Paul* doth express his charitable confidence of them, that they may be thereby incited to their duty. *We have confidence that ye both do, and will do.* 5. As the life of a Christian is more in practice and in doing, than in profession and word-speaking; So the rule of their practice is not the example of others, *Exod.* 23. 2. nor yet the dictates of their mother-wit or natural reason, *Rom.* 1. 21, 22. and much less, the sway and inclination of their corrupt affections, *Isa.* 57. — 17. but the word of God and those injunctions of his sent Ministers which they as his Lyon-heraulds do press upon them from him; for, he expresseth the Christian mans exercise, by doing what he commanded them in the name and authority of Jesus Christ. *Ye both do and will do the things which we command you,* saith he. 6. The practice and obedience of Christians according to the forementioned rule, must be both universal, extending it self to all that is commanded, and constant, so as not only they begin well, but also continue unto their Journeys end;

end; for, so was their obedience. *We are confident ye both do and will do the things which we command.*

*Ver. 5. And the Lord direct your hearts into the love of God, and into the patient waiting for Christ.*

Followeth his third exhortation, whereby, while he prayeth the Lord to *direct their hearts* or make them straight, he doth also indirectly incite them to the exercise of two graces, which are chief parts of, and have special influence upon the obedience formerly pressed. First, *the love of God*, understand, that whereby we love God; under which is contained love to our Neighbour, as a stream flowing from that fountain, *Matth. 22. 37, 39*. Although the sense and feeling of Gods love to us spoken of *Rom. 5. 5*. needeth not to be excluded. Secondly, *Patient waiting for Christ*, or (as the word is in the original) *patience of Christ*. It implyeth patience with expectation, even such a patient enduring of hardships in the way of our duty for Christs sake, as is joined with, and floweth from a well-grounded expectation of good things to be received from Christ, especially at his second coming. *Doct. 1.* As the hearts of men are in the hand of the Lord, who alone can powerfully encline, direct and turn them where-ever he will, *Prov. 21. 1*. So it concerneth us highly to see to the heart that it be rightly inclined, seeing wheresoever it goeth, it doth powerfully draw

draw the whole man with it; for, *Paul* doth pray the Lord to direct their hearts. 2. That Christians do continue constant in the course of begun obedience, there is of necessity required a continual supply of influence from God, together with some fervour of love to him, and patient expectation of good things to be received from him, which may serve as cords to draw us forward in the way of duty, against all tentations and discouragements which will be otherwise prevalent to retard and draw us backward, 2 Cor. 5. 14. Psal. 27. 13. for, as a mean of their continuing to do what he commanded them, he prayeth the Lord to direct their hearts into the love of God and patient waiting for Christ. 3. As the heart of man is by nature crooked and perverse; So it is in a special manner averse from the love of God, whom, though he be the chief good, yet, every man by nature doth hate, though not as he is Creator and preserver of the world, yet as he is a just Judge armed with vengeance against evil doers, yea and there are dregs of this averfeness even in the truly Godly, who have a law in their members rebelling against the Law of God written in their mind and renewed part, Rom. 7. 23. for, this crookedness and averfeness from love to God is implied, while he prayeth the Lord to direct, or make straight, their hearts into the love of God. 4. The hearts of men by nature are also averse from undergoing a suffering lot for Christ, and from taking that comfort under the cross which ariseth from the hope of a promised out-gate and reward, as being unwilling to give any further trust to the precious promises than they see of present performance,

422 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

performance, *2 Pet.* 3. 4. yea, and there are dregs of this averſeneſs alſo in the truly regenerate (though not allowed of by themſelves, *Pſal.* 42. 9.) as appeareth from their deſire to ſhift a cleanly croſs, *Matth.* 16. 22. and therefore ſmall courage oft-times under it, *Heb.* 12. 13. or hopes of an out-gate from it, *1 Sam.* 27. 1 — for averſeneſs is alſo implied while he prayeth the Lord to direct their hearts — into the patient waiting for Chriſt, 5. How averſe ſoever the hearts of men in nature, or of men renewed, are from the exerciſe of thoſe or other graces; yet there is omnipotency in God to make them ſtraight when he will, and to encline them powerfully to love where they hate, to take up a croſs for Chriſt contentedly; and to hope for what they ſee not, confidently; for, while the Apoſtle prayeth that the Lord would direct them to love and patience, he doth ſuppoſe that God hath power ſo to direct them. 6. The graces of love to God, of patience under a ſuffering lot and of well-grounded hope, do well together, in ſo far as where love to God is rooted in the heart, together with a firm expectation of all thoſe good things contained in the promiſe to be received from him, there can be nothing too hard to be undergone and ſuffered for him, *Rom.* 8. 35. *2 Cor.* 4. 16. with 5. for, Paul doth pray for all thoſe jointly, even the love of God and patient waiting for Chriſt: ſee the Expoſition.

Ver. 6. Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw your selves from every brother that walketh disorderly, and not after the tradition which he received of us.

Here beginneth his fourth exhortation, upon which he insisteth most and dealeth more peremptorily in it, than in any of the former, as that which is his great work in the first part of this Chapter, and to which all the rest have been preparatory insinuations. And first, being to handle this purpose more generally to v. 11. he straitly commands them *in the name* and authority of *Jesus Christ* to *withdraw from*, or have no familiar intimate fellowship with, *any brother*, or Christian in external profession, *who walketh disorderly*, or that, as a disorderly souldier (from which the word in the original is borrowed) did any wayes transgress the order, bounds and limits of his particular calling and station assigned him by God, and thereby proved offensive to the Church, and especially such as lived idly neglecting their own business, and intruded themselves upon the affairs of others (see v. 11.) even all those (as the Apostle doth here further explain himself) who walked contrary unto and not after *that tradition*, or doctrine, delivered by him against idlers whereof, v. 10. and therefore were to be discountenanced, and their company abandoned as is here commanded. Now though every Christian is bound to abstain from all voluntary and unnecessary fellowship with profane men,



424 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

men, in so far as they do not seem to countenance or encourage them in their sin, even though they be not excommunicate and cast out by the Church, *Psal.* 26. 4, 5. yet seeing it is clear the Apostle speaketh of excommunication, *v.* 14. and the disorderly walking here mentioned is a sin continued in after publick ( *1 Thes.* 4. 11. ) and private admonition ( *1 Thes.* 5. 14. ) Therefore the withdrawing from their fellowship here commanded seemeth to be the consequent of the Churches publick censure, in the enjoying whereof the antecedent censure is enjoyed also, to wit, that the Church-guides should excommunicate the contumacious, and all Church-members should withdraw from the party so censured. And seeing this purpose is handled here more generally and to be insisted on more particularly, *v.* 11, &c. I shall only observe these general doctrines from it, 1. Though Ministers ought in wisdom to deal with the Lords people, for the most part, by meek intreaties and prudent insinuations ( see *v.* 4. *doct.* 3. ) yet where their authority, or rather the authority of Christ in them, hath been contemned, their meekness abused, and when they have to do with a prevalent growing evil, it is their duty to be more peremptory, and with all authority to charge and command ; for, so doth *Paul* here in those cases, *now we command you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* But, 2. The sharpness of their most peremptory commands should be in prudence allayed somewhat, with a seasonable mixture of their affection and brotherly love to those, whom they so command ; lest otherwayes their imperious way be

be lookt upon as a piece of insolency, and meet with contempt and disdain instead of obedience; for, so doth the Apostle here while he calleth them *brethren*. Now we command you brethren, &c. 3. A Minister should also see to it carefully that his peremptory commands and threatnings be grounded upon the authority of Christ, as being first enjoyned and denounced by him, otherwise he cannot expect that any thing spoken by him, though with never so much authority, zeal and boldness, can have great weight in peoples consciences; for, such were *Pauls* peremptory commands. We command you in the name of our Lord *Jesus Christ*. 4. It hath ever been the lot of the Church of Christ to have some professors in it, whose way and carriage hath been in no measure answerable unto that which they did profess; for, even in this Church, so highly commended, *chap. 1. 3, 4.* there were some such, as is supposed while he bids them *withdraw from every brother*, or Church-member, *who walketh disorderly*. 5. The way and carriage of such is more to be detested and shunned, than if they were professed enemies, in so far as they are a greater reproach to the Gospel, *2 Pet. 2. 13.* and make the name of God which they profess to be blasphemed by others; *Rom. 2. 23, 24.* for, *Paul* bids *withdraw*, not so much from avowed Heathens, as, *from every brother that walketh disorderly*. 6. There is no Church-member whose quality, rank or station, doth wholly exempt his disorderly scandalous walking from the Ecclesiastical cognition of Christs Ministers, or can keep the Lords people free of hurt and damage from his evil

426 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

evil example, if they converse familiarly with him; for, he bids the people *withdraw from every brother*, without exception, *who walketh disorderly*, which supponeth that the Church-guides should first censure them, as was shewn in the Exposition.

7. There is a difference to be made, both in the inflicting of Church-censures by Church-guides, and in the withdrawing of familiar fellowship by private Christians; betwixt those, who being surprized with some violent temptation, do but once or twice step aside from the rule of their duty, and others whose continued strain and course of life is still disorderly: for, he bids *withdraw* only from those *who walk disorderly*, or whose continued way and course was such, as the word *walk* imports.

8. So hardly are our hearts brought up to a perfect hatred and detestation of sin; that though possibly we have some abhorrence from committing it our selves, yet we take pleasure in them who do it, and with great difficulty we are made to withdraw from them or discountenance them in it; for, therefore he seeth it needful to give them such a peremptory charge, *in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, to withdraw from them that walk disorderly*, and the word rendred *withdraw* signifieth to abstain from that whither the sway and inclination of our mind doth carry us.

9. As once receiving and professed embracing of Divine truths for the rule of duty, doth make the rejecter thereof more guilty, than if he had not received them at all: So those do live disorderly whose life and conversation is not ordered according to the prescript of Gods word, how strictly soever they do

do conform themselves to the Civil Laws of the Land wherein they live : for, he saith that *brother did walk disorderly*, who did not walk according to the tradition, or doctrine delivered by him from God, and aggravate their sin from this that they had once received that tradition. *And not after the tradition which he received of us*, saith he.

Ver. 7. *For your selves know how ye ought to follow us : for we behaved not our selves disorderly among you.*

Here is a reason serving both to inforce the duty of censuring, and withdrawing from those, who walked disorderly, and to aggravate the sin of those who did so walk. It is taken from the Apostles example propounded first here in general. *He walked not disorderly*, that is, lived not idly, as he after explains. And for the force of this reason to condemn the contrary practice, he appealeth to their own conscience, if they did not know and were sufficiently convinced of their obligation to follow his example; and to discountenance those who did otherwise, to wit, in so far as he was a follower of Christ, 1 Cor. 11. 1. as he was indeed in this particular, and they did also know it. *Doct. 1.* As Christians ought to walk according to their knowledge. So he is not worthy of the name of a Christian, who knoweth not this, that a man is bound to follow the example of his Minister, in so far as he doth follow Christ; seeing Ministers are given to teach the Lords people not by their doctrine only but by their example also, 1 Tim. 4. 12. for, *Paul*

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428 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

supponeth they knew how they ought to follow him, and draws an argument from thence for pressing this duty upon themselves, *for ye your selves know how ye ought to follow us.* 2. As all who know their duty do not walk according to it, but too too many do live in the practice of those evils, for which their heart, their light, and conscience doth condemn them : So sins done against knowledge have in them a singular weight and aggravation beyond sins of ignorance. They make the sinner more inexcusable, *Rom. 2. 1.* and his punishment the greater, *Luk. 12. 47.* for, he aggravateth their sin from this that they knew they should have followed his example, and yet did it not : *for your selves know how ye ought to follow us,* saith he. 3. It aggravateth also our neglect of duty not a little, that we not only know our duty, but also have a cloud of witnesses and shining examples going before us in the way of our duty, whereby all pretence of impossibility to perform our duty is removed, seeing men subject to the like infirmities have already practised it ; for, he aggravateth their sin from this, that he and his associates had given them an example in the contrary, *we behaved not our selves disorderly among you.* 4. It concerneth much the Lords servants, who are sent to press the practice of duty upon others, so to walk, as their life and carriage may hold out a copy of that obedience which they require from the Lords people. Hereby their doctrine hath the greater weight, *Matth. 5. 15, 16.* and otherwise they are a reproach to the Gospel, *1 Sam. 2. 17.* and they themselves, at least, do reap no profit by it, *1 Cor. 9. 23.*  
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for, Paul practised himself what he pressed upon others. *We behaved not our selves disorderly among you.*

Ver. 8. *Neither did we eat any mans bread for nought ; but wrought with labour and travel night and day, that we might not be chargeable to any of you.*

He applyeth what he spoke of his own example in general to the particular wherein they were guilty, by shewing he *did not eat bread*, or take his ordinary food in meat and drink ( as *Gen. 3. 19.* ) *from any man for nought*, or without money, and price payed for it. Where he speaks according to the common opinion of earthly minded men, who think whatever maintenance is given to Ministers for their Ministerial labours is bestowed upon them for nought, though it be not so, *Mat. 10. 10.* Now the Apostle sheweth that even in their sense he took nothing for nought, but that he might be able to sustain himself, besides his publick preaching ( which was his proper employment, *1 Cor. 1. 17.* ) he wrought in tent-making, *Act. 18. 3.* even to weariness, and after he was wearied, as the words, *labour and travel*, do imply, and that both *night and day*, ( See upon *1 Thes. 2. 9.* ) and he mentioneth a twofold end proposed to himself why he did so work ; The first is in this verse, *That he might not be chargeable*, or burthensome to *any* of them. He meaneth not as if the maintenance of a Minister should be accounted a burthen by the flock, but that some miserable wretches among

430 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

them would have thought it so. Besides, it is not improbable that a great part ( though not all, *Act.* 17.4. ) of those who had first received the Gospel in that City were of the poorer sort, whom he had no will indeed to burthen. Besides what is marked upon a parallel place, *1 Thes.* 2.9. *doct.* 3, 4, 5. concerning 1. A necessity lying upon men of dimitting themselves to the meanest of employments before they want a mean of livelyhood. 2. The lawfulness of a Ministers using some handy labour in some cases. 3. The groundlesnes of the Popish tenet about works of supererrogation; observe further hence 1. Circumstances of time, place, company and such like, may make an action become exceeding sinful; and abstinence from it a necessary duty at some times, the practice whereof is in it self indifferent, lawful, yea and in some cases necessary: for, all things being considered, it was a necessary duty for *Paul* not to take bread of those *Thessalonians* without price, though the thing in it self be not simply unlawful. Otherwise, hospitality and giving of meat for nought could not be commanded, *Titus* 1. 8. nor those ancient love-feasts among Christian friends could be commended, as we find they are; *Jude* 12. *Neither did we eat any mans bread for nought.* 2. The Lord doth sometimes call his servants to spend and be spent among a people, from whom they do receive or can expect but little of worldly encouragement, that thereby they may have an occasion to make their sincerity in the work of the Lord appear both to their own heart and the consciences of others, who may evidently see their Ministers are not seeking theirs but them,

them, 2 *Cor.* 12. 14. for, *Paul* did not receive ſo much encouragement worldly as bread to eat among thoſe *Theſſalonians*. *Neither did we eat any mans bread for nought.* 3. It pleaſes the Lord in deepeſt wiſdom, ſometimes, to meaſure out a very hard lot in things worldly to his deareſt ſervants, and to give but little of earth to thoſe who glorifie him moſt upon earth, and upon whom he intends to beſtow a more than ordinary meaſure of glory in Heaven, that none may know by thoſe things whether he be worthy of love or hatred, *Eccleſ.* 9.--1. for, even *Paul*, that elect veſſel of the Lord, is made to work for a livelyhood *with labour and travel night and day.* 4. Though Miniſters are not tyed to follow this example of *Pauls*, here recorded, in all particulars, becauſe of the great inequality betwixt him and them, by reaſon of his ſuper-eminent gifts, and his extraordinary aſſiſtance, which made it leſs neceſſary for him to ſpend ſo much of his time in reading and preparation for publick duties, as ordinary Miniſters muſt do. Beſides, that ſome reaſons peculiar to this Church and to that of *Corinth*, did oblige him ſo to walk towards them, though he did not find himſelf ſo obliged towards others who had not the like reaſons. However, I ſay, that therefore other ordinary Miniſters are not tyed to follow his example in all particulars; yet they are ſo far to follow it, as to endeavour that the Goſpel which they Preach may be as little burthenſome and chargeable to people as in them lyeth: for this was the thing *Paul* aimed at, *that we might not be chargeable unto any of you*, ſaith he. 5. It is a duty incumbent unto the Lords



432 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

people to maintain their Ministers in a way creditable to the Gospel, even when, through reason of poverty, their so doing would prove burthenfome unto them; for, he saith not, that they ought not to have sustained him, because of their poverty, only he would not eat their bread for nought, *that he might not be burthenfome unto them*, and v. 9. he asserts his own power and right to have exacted maintenance from them, and consequently they were bound to give it.

Ver. 9. *Not because we have not power, but to make our selves an ensample unto you to follow us.*

Lest the Apostles example had been urged by covetous wretches, for a law and rule to the prejudice of other Ministers, though not in the same circumstantial case with *Paul*, he doth therefore, first, assert his power and right to take maintenance from them, so that his not exacting it was not because *he had not power* to demand it. Next, he mentioneth the second end why he laboured so hard, and did not exact his right, to wit, that he might thereby in his own practice hold forth a lively *example* and copy to be followed by them, both in what he had prescribed to them about diligence in some lawful calling, seeing he did more than otherwise he needed for their example and encouragement, as also in departing somewhat from their right as he had done, rather than they should over-burthen their brethren. *Doct. 1.* Though there is nothing more reasonable than that they which wait at the Altar be

be partakers of the Altar, 1 Cor. 9. 3. — and that a Minister who spends his time and strength among a people should be maintained by them; yet the contrary opinion hath been early hatched and alwayes held on foot by some, who look upon the Ministry as an idle calling, and that nothing of right belongeth to them who labour in it, as due unto them, for their works sake, Satan hereby taking advantage of the earthly-mindedness of some, and heart-enmity to the Gospel in others, to starve the Gospel and publick ordinances of Gods worship out of the world, when he cannot prevail to drive them away by force; for, *Paul* foresaw there would be some so disposed; and therefore asserts the right of Ministers to exact maintenance, *not because we have not power*, saith he. 2. It concerneth therefore the Ministers of Jesus Christ to assert their right, both by the Laws of God and men, to a competency of worldly maintenance, and carefully to guard, lest any deed of theirs do weaken their right, though not so much from respect to themselves, who, at least many of them, have sufficient parts to employ in any other calling for gaining their livelyhood, as well as other men, but from respect to the Gospel and the eternal well-being of peoples souls; for, *Paul* foreseeing that his example would possibly be alledged by some covetous misers to enervate the Divine right of Ministers to maintenance, he doth here assert it, *Not because we have not power*, saith he. 3. Christian sobriety will teach a man so to speak to the commendation of his own moderation, and not exacting the rigour of his right in some cases, as that he do not reflect

434 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

upon others who do not exercise the same moderation, as not being called to it, because they are not in the same case; for, *Paul* doth not reflect upon the practice of other Ministers, who not being in the like case with him, should exact maintenance, while he asserteth both his own and their right to it. *Not because we have not power*, saith he. 4. Not only Ministers, but all and every one are bound to remit somewhat of that, which, in strictest justice, they might exact, rather than to over-burthen, and break their poor brethren, by exacting all their right from them; for, he holds forth his example in remitting of his right to be followed not only by Ministers, but the people also in the like case, *but to make our selves an ensample unto you to follow us*, saith he. 5. The Lords Ministers should, as by all lawful means, so especially by the exercise of wise and justifiable moderation in things relating to this present world, endeavour to gain that love and respect among the people of their flock, whereby they may be the more incited to follow their example in things honest and just; especially seeing such is the humour of people, as not to trouble themselves much in following their copy, except they affect and respect the hand that wrote it; for, *Paul* did remit of that which was otherwise his just right, to make himself *an example unto them to follow him*.

Ver. 10. *For even when we were with you, this we commanded you, that if any man would not work, neither should he eat.*

Here is a second reason serving both to condemn the sin of idleness and their neglect of censuring that sin, because their practice herein was not only contrary to his example, as is already shewn, but also to his doctrine, whereby he had commanded and by his Apostolick authority enacted for a standing law, that *whosoever* having otherwayes strength and opportunity, *will not work*, that is, employ, either his body, or mind, or both, in some honest labour, for promoting one way or other the good of mankind, such a man *should not eat*, that is, should not be born with, fed, or maintained among Christians, that so being reduced to straits, he may be constrained to betake himself to some honest employment. *Doct. 1.* As the Lords Ministers should press upon people, not only practice of religious duties, but also painfulness and diligence in some particular calling: So it is the duty of the Lords people, and of every one in their station, to promote obedience to the lawful commands of Christs Ministers, both in themselves and in others; for, *Paul* doth press upon all to work in some particular calling, and to promote obedience to his direction herein, by discountenancing such as would not obey, while he commandeth that *if any would not work, neither should he eat.* 2. As it is the duty of Ministers to give timely warning against a sin, when it beginneth to spread, and before it come to a height

436 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

height among a people : So the more temeous warning hath been given of the evil that is in any sin, the greater is their guilt, who notwithstanding continue in it, or do not what they might and should to suppress it ; for, *Paul* had given order timeously, even while he was with them, to suppress this sin of idleness, and doth hence aggravate their guilt in that they had not done so : *for even when we were with you, this we commanded you.* 3. It concerneth all men, and especially those who are entrusted with the Churches common Charity, to employ it wisely, and so as, to the best of their knowledge, they do not thereby furnish fuel to the lusts of any, or feed them in their sinful idleness, or any other way misapply it to such as are not due objects ; for, the command is given to all men, chiefly to the Church-guides, that they do not employ their own, or the Churches charity, to maintain idle vagabonds and wilful loyterers. *If any would not work, neither should he eat.* 4. It is the Lords allowance that those who do not work, not, because they will not, but either they are not able to work, or though they be able and gladly would, yet cannot get employment to work, I say, it is the Lords allowance that such be, so far as is possible, maintained upon the charity of others, especially if they have nothing of their own whereby to maintain themselves ; for, the command is not given about those who do not work, through want of ability, or of opportunity, but only them *who will not work, that they should not eat.*

Ver. 11. *For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busie-bodies.*

The Apostle being to speak both to idle loyters, and to this Church which did tolerate them, more particularly to v. 16. doth first both give a reason of what he hath said to this purpose already from v. 6. as appears from the causal particle *for*, and also make way for that which he is yet to speak more, while he sheweth he had spoken nothing rashly or without ground, but had heard (doubtless by trust-worthy informers, such as are mentioned 1 Cor. 1. 11.) that notwithstanding of his former warning, 1 Thes. 4. 11. and 5. 14. there were some who walked disorderly among them, and were not censured by them, whom he describeth from two of their properties, which seem repugnant, and yet do well agree, and usually go together. *They do nothing at all*, to wit, in those things which they ought, and to which they have a calling. And yet are *busie-bodies*, and but too diligent, to wit, about those things, which belong not to them.

Doct. 1. It is not contrary to charity and prudence for one Christian to report, delate, and make relation of what miscarriages he doth observe in others, providing he do not thereby seek their disgrace and shame, but their amendment, and in order to that end do report their faults, chiefly to those, who may by some means contribute to help forward their repentance; for, some did certainly make report of those miscarriages in this Church to *Paul*, who had power

power to take order with them, otherwise he could not have heard them, *for we hear that there are some, &c.* 2. As Ministers should not charge a Church or particular person with the guilt of any sin, rashly, or without a ground; lest, otherwise, his precipitant rashness do discover in him the want of prudence and charity: So it is not rashness in a Minister to reprove and tax a man, of whose guilt in that particular for which he doth reprove him, he knoweth nothing but by report only, providing he believe not every report, but what he hath from trust-worthy informers, *1 Cor. 1. 11.* for, *Paul*, to clear himself that he had not taxed them rashly, doth shew *he heard that there were some among them who walked disorderly.* 3. It concerneth a Minister prudently to enquire, and seek to know what fruits the Gospel Preached by him doth bring forth among the people of his charge, what sins are most prevalent with them, and what vertues are exercised by them; that thereby he may be the more enabled for speaking pertinently unto them; for, in order to this end *Paul* did labour to inform himself, otherwise he would not so readily have heard *that there were some which walked among them disorderly, working not at all.* 4. It is the part of a wise reprovor not to charge the faults of a few upon all in common; lest instead of convincing those who are guilty and making them better, he irritate those who are not guilty and make them worse; Thus doth *Paul* in wisdom astrict his charge to some among them only. *I hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly.* 5. There have been alwayes some in the Church, who  
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having taken on a name for profession, and possibly thereby come to some respect among the Godly, have, under a pretext of giving themselves to more than ordinary devotion, cast by all care of any particular calling, and lived hand-idle, to the hurt of others upon whom they lived, and to the reproach of the Gospel; for, such were they in this Church, *some who walked disorderly, working nothing at all.*

6. The mind of man cannot be wholly idle, but must be employed in somewhat, if not in doing what is good and profitable, then of necessity in what is evil, useles or hurtful: and usually none are more busie in other mens matters, than they who wholly neglect their own: for, those disorderly walkers *did not work at all* in their own affairs, and yet *were busie bodies* in the affairs of others.

Ver. 12. *Now them that are such, we command, and exhort by our Lord Jesus Christ, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread.*

He doth, next, speak to those who were guilty of walking disorderly, and both peremptorily *commands* them, and most affectionately *exhorts* them, in the *name* and authority of *Christ the Lord*, first, *to work*, and so to quit idleness; 2. *To work with quietness*, that is, containing themselves within the bounds of their calling, without creating trouble, either to themselves or others; from which would follow, 3. *They should eat their own bread*, gotten by their own labours, and not given them in almes, or for nought. *Doct. 1.* So great a tyrant  
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is custome in any sin, and especially a custome of lazy ease and idleness, that when a people are once habituate to it, they are very hardly driven from it; for, his charging them so hard to quit their idleness, implyeth that it was great difficulty to drive them from it, being now for a long time accustomed to it. *Now them that are such we command and exhort.* 2. When sins do grow so common, that either through the moral guilt which is in them, or the civil inconvenience which followeth upon them, or both, they do portend no less than apparent ruine to the whole Church, then especially should the Lords Ministers bend the utmost of their endeavours, what by themselves, what by others, to suppress them, and to reclaim the Lords people from the practice of them; for, this sin of idleness did threaten the dissipation of the Church, both morally, considering the great guilt was in it, and civilly, considering how poor this Church in all probability was; and therefore the Apostle is so fervent and serious to suppress it, and to stir up the whole Church to take notice of it. *Now them that are such we command and exhort.* 3. So merciful is God that he doth not wholly cease to deal with sinners as if they were desperate, after one or more repulses, but gives them many renewed on-sets, whereby he intendeth to gain some, *Joh. 4. 7, 10, 13, 16, 21, 26.* and to make others more inexcusable: *Matth. 11. 21, 22.* for, though those idlers had received several admonitions to no purpose, yet *Paul*, in Christs name and authority and by warrant from him, doth here again command and exhort them that *with quietness they work.* 4. Though

4. Though the sentence of excommunication, as we shall hear from *v. 14.* be in it self lawful; yet so dreadful is it, that there should be a kind of loathsomeness in Christs Ministers to pronounce it, if by any other means they may draw the obstinate sinner to repentance, and so prevent it; for, notwithstanding of many former admonitions, he doth here give them one further, before he give order to pronounce the sentence. *Now them that are such we command and exhort.* 5. Such should be a Ministers way of dealing with most obstinate sinners, in order to their gaining, as that he make known he doth not look upon them as wholly void of all sense of God and goodness, and secretly at least insinuate he hath yet some contrary thoughts of them; that thereby, if it be possible, he may quicken any dying principle of conscience, any sense of Heaven or Hell, of right or wrong, and any awe of God which yet may be lurking in them; for, therefore doth he *exhort them by our Lord Jesus Christ*, implying thereby he did not think they had cast off all respect to him. 6. The more a man be busied with his own employments, the less will his leisure be to meddle with the affairs of others: and consequently, will create less trouble either to himself or to those who live beside him; for, he joyneth those two together, a mans working his own work, and his quiet abstinence from meddling with, or troubling others. *That with quietness they work.* 7. That the Lord hath established property and dominion of goods, See upon *Ephes. 4. v. 28. doct. 2.* which is also clear from this, that he speaks of their

442 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

*own bread*, that is, which they have a proper right unto. 8. Beside those other wayes of attaining right and property, by inheritance, *Gen. 15. 4.* gift, *1 Sam. 9. 9.* contract or bargain, *Ruth 4. 9.* this is one, whatever a man doth purchase by his lawful industry and pains is properly his own, and may be employed by him for his own good and necessary use with Gods allowance; for, he calls the bread, which they should purchase by working with quietness, *their own bread.* 9. The Lord doth ordinarily bless a mans conscientious diligence in his lawful calling with such a measure of success, as he may have wherewith to sustain himself, and be kept from being burthensome to others; for, he sheweth, that, upon their working with quietness, *they should eat their own bread.*

Ver. 13. *But ye, brethren, be not weary in well-doing.*

He speaketh, thirdly, to those who walked orderly among them. And first, he doth lovingly exhort them, as *brethren, not to weary* or become worse (as the word signifieth) that is, remiss or slack in well-doing where, by *well-doing* may be understood conscientious making of their duty in general, and more particularly, 1. Painful diligence in their lawful employments, wherein they were in hazard of being rendred remiss by the loitering carriage of others. 2. Their charitable beneficence towards necessitous objects, from which they were not to desist under pretext of his forbidding them to maintain idle loyterers, *v. 10.* or of the abounding  
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of many unworthy objects, by relieving of whom formerly they had miſapplied their charity. To this ſenſe is the like phraſe uſed *Gal. 6. 10* —

*Doct. 1.* The Miniſter of Chriſt muſt ſo reprove the ſtubborn and diſobedient, as that he do not neglect to ſpeak to the direction and encouragement of thoſe who are better inclined, more obedient and tractable : And as there are ſeveral tempers, caſes and conditions among a mixed multitude ; ſo muſt the Miniſter ſet himſelf to give every one their due, neglecting none ; this is to cut and divide the word of God aright, *2 Tim. 2. 15.* for, ſo doth *Paul* ; having ſpoken to the diſorderly, *v. 12.* he doth now ſpeak to thoſe who walked orderly.

*But ye brethren be not weary.* 2. As it is not ſufficient for men once to have entered the courſe of well doing, but they muſt continue in it : So, conſidering the many diſcouragements wherewith men do meet in this courſe, and thoſe eſpecially which do ariſe from the bad examples of others, there is no ſmall propenſeneſs, even in the beſt, to ſit up in it ; for, *Paul* perceiving a probability of their turning remiſs from the bad example of thoſe who walked diſorderly, he exhorts them that they would *not be weary in well-doing.* 3. It is an incumbent duty to the Lords people, and a duty which muſt be made conſcience of, if ſo they would prove themſelves orderly walkers, not only to ply their lawful callings diligently, that thereby they may have wherewith to ſuſtain themſelves, but alſo to beſtow ſome part of their gain, a meaſure at leaſt proportioned to their ability, for the help and ſupply of neceſſitous objects ; for, *Paul* enjoyneth

444 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

to those who walked orderly, not only to work with quietness, but also to make conscience of *well-doing*, under which is contained charitable beneficence to due objects, *be not weary in well-doing.*

4. As many men are most ingenious and witty to find out excuses and pretexts to colour their neglect of the forementioned duty, what from the unworthiness of many objects, by bestowing their charity on whom they may misapply it and lose it, what from texts of Scripture wrested to justify their avaritious and merciless disposition: So no excuse of that kind will have weight before the Lord, but be looked upon as meer pretexts and shifts to cover and cloak mens wretched naughtiness and averfeness from that which they are otherwise sufficiently convinced to be a duty, if they had a mind to it; for, *Paul* foreseeing that some would cover their averfeness under those pretexts (see the Exposition) doth here exhort them *not to be weary in well-doing.*

Ver. 14. *And if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man, and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed.*

He prescribes unto them, next, what they should do for censuring the delinquents; and first, *if any man*, whatever he was, *did not obey*, but remain contumaciously disobedient to the Apostles word, or exhortation to orderly walking, after he was now again admonished by *this Epistle*, they, to wit, the Church-guides, should *note him*, or as the word doth signifie, make a sign or wonder of him, put a mark

mark or brand of infamy upon him, whereby he meaneth no other, than that ignominious mark of excommunication, as appears from the second thing here enjoyned to the Lords people in relation to the party so noted, they were to *have no company with him*, where all intimate familiarity, to which they were not obliged by any civil, or natural bond, is discharged them, which is the very consequent of excommunication expressed by the same word in the original, *1 Cor. 5. 11.* and in the close of the verse he expresseth one end of inflicting this censure, that the party censured, being thus discountenanced by all, as a man unworthy of their company, may be *ashamed* of his sin, and so ashamed of it, as to turn from it to his duty, as the greek word implyeth, and so it is the same in effect with that end of excommunication, which is expressed *1 Cor. 5. 5. Doct. 1.* Even the most faithful, pious and painful Ministers, when they have done their utmost to reclaim obstinate offenders, and waited upon them with all patience and meekness; have ground in reason to forecast and suppose that their pains and diligence will not be blessed unto all, but that some, the more they are laboured with, will prove the more obdured and perverse; The Lord so overruling, hereby to teach his servants; that the utmost of their endeavours can prevail nothing without his blessing, *1 Cor. 3. 6, 7.* and that the glory of their gaining ground upon any should be ascribed to God, and not to themselves, *1 Cor. 15. — 20.* for, even *Paul*; after his long patience and unwearied diligence, supponeth so much, *and if any man*; saith he, *obey not our word by this Epistle*;

446 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

2. It is the will and command of Christ, the King and head of his Church, that his publick Ministers and Church-guides (*Joh. 20. 23.*) being convened together (*1 Cor. 5. 4.*) do put a mark and brand of infamy upon those, who with an high hand do persevere in their wickedness after fore-going admonitions stubbornly despised or carelessly neglected, while in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, *1 Cor. 5. 4.* they excommunicate, cut off and cast out all such from the society of the Church—that the leaven of their sin spread not further to infect others, *1 Cor. 5. 6, 7.* and that the sin of some few, tolerated and connived at by the Church, be not a matter of reproach and disgrace to the whole, *1 Cor. 5. 1, 2.* that others may be deterred from the like obstinacy, by the severity of the censure, *1 Tim. 5. 20.* and that the party against whom the sentence is pronounced, may, by the Lords blessing upon that mean, be brought to repentance: for, *Paul* bids *note* the contumacious man with the ignominious brand of excommunication, that he *may be ashamed*, or brought to repentance by that mean.

3. Even those sins which are not in their own nature most heinous, when contumacy against fore-going admonitions is joyned with them, do make the person guilty lyable to this severe censure, in so far as they argue desperate obstinacy, and contempt of that authority wherewith Christ hath invested his courts and servants: for, *Paul* will have even the sin of living idly, being joyned with contumacy, to be censured thus. *And if any man obey not our word by this Epistle, note that man.* 4. The credit of a whole Church, the salvation of a mans soul,

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his gaining to God by repentance, are much to be preferred to the reputation and credit of any particular person, so that the latter ought not to be spared, if there be not another probable mean, for the preservation of, or attaining to the former: for, saith Paul, *if any man obey not our word, note him, to wit, with a mark of infamy, that he may be ashamed.* 5. Church-censures, even the highest, are to be dispensed impartially, so that where the sins deserving censure are the same, and the probability of attaining the ends, for which the censure is inflicted, the same, the same censure is to be inflicted upon all without respect of persons; for, he saith, *if any man, without exception, obey not — note that man.* 6. Exhortations in Scripture must be restricted according to the nature of the subject in hand, so that when the Scripture it self, at least in that place, doth not expressly design those to whom the exhortation is directed, we must not think it is alwayes directed indefinitely to all, if so the duty exhorted unto, doth, according to other Scriptures, belong only to some; for, the two directions of the text, *note that man, and, keep not company with him,* are not given to one and the same persons, for all must abstain, even women, from the fellowship of the party excommunicate, *Marth. 18. 17.* but the inflicting of the censure, expressed by *noting,* belongs not to all, certainly not to women, *1 Tim. 2. 12.* nor yet to any but the Church-guides, according to *Heb. 13. 17. doct. 6.* So many wayes advantagious is familiar conversing with the Lords people, *Prov. 10. 21. and 13. 20.* that it is no small punishment for any man to be debarred from



it; and therefore it cannot be but exceeding sinful for any to shun it willingly, or not to improve it for his advantage when he doth enjoy it: for *Paul* enjoyneth Christians to *have no company* with the censured party, as a sore and bitter ingredient in his punishment. 7. As nothing hardeneth a sinner more in wickedness, than that, notwithstanding of it, he loseth nothing of his esteem among good men, for any thing he can discern from their countenance and carriage: So there is nothing which proveth by the Lords blessing a more effectual mean to make the sinner ashamed of his sin, and because of shame to turn from it; than when he seeth himself discountenanced and his company shunned as a very plague by all, because of it: for, *Paul* enjoyns them to *have no company with him*, for this very end, *that he may be ashamed*, and so, as to turn from it to God.

Ver. 15. *Tet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother.*

The third thing which he prescribeth unto those who walked orderly, is moderation in the execution of the forementioned censure, propounded, 1. Negatively, that they should *not count him as an enemy*, that is, so as to forsake him wholly, as men do their enemies, without any further care of reclaiming him, but, next, positively, it was their duty to *admonish him*, that is, mind him of his duty and hazard, to wit, if so there might be any hopes to regain him, *Matth. 7. 6.* and to admonish him as a sickly brother under cure, to wit, so as he might understand he was not wholly cast out of their heart, hopes

hopes, and affection, though cut off from all voluntary intimate fellowship with them, *v. 14. Doct. 1.* While the servants of Christ are labouring to draw the Lords people from the one extreame of any sin, they have need to guard lest they run upon the other, as for example, from too much lenity and compliance with scandalous offenders, to the other extremity of bitterness and too much rigidity; for, *Paul*, having indirectly reprov'd them for the former, doth here guard against the latter. *Yet count him not as an enemy*, saith he. 2. The censure of excommunication, when inflicted for contumacy in some particular evils, whether of judgement or practice, and not for total apostasie, doth not exclude the party censured from being a member of the visible Church, but only from the actual enjoyment of Church-priviledges, and from the visible Communion of the Church: for, he bids *count the excommunicate man, not as an enemy, but, as a brother.* 3. The censure, even of excommunication it self, should so be used, as that love to the salvation of him who is censured be still retained, and endeavours flowing from love used to reclaim him, when occasion offereth; for, so much is enjoyed, while he *commands to admonish him as a brother.* 4. Then do we kyth our brotherly love and affection aright, and as we ought towards an *excommunicate* person, when we do not keep intimate and familiar fellowship with him, as we might, kyth our affection to others who are not under that sentence, *1 Thes. 5. 26.* and much less do flatter him in his sin and obstinacy, but when we do admonish him of his sin and hazard, and make

450 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

him thereby know we love him, and in the mean time deny him any other testimony of our affection, except what civil or natural bonds do bind us to discharge towards him: for, *Paul* having forbidden to converse familiarly with him, will have them kyth their brotherly love towards him only by admonishing him: *but admonish him as a brother.*

*Ver. 16. Now the Lord of peace himself give you peace alwayes, by all means. The Lord be with you all.*

In the second part of the Chapter he concludeth the Epistle, which he doth, first, in this verse, by a prayer to God consisting of two petitions, first, because the censuring of the contumacious presently enjoyed might occasion some troubling of the Churches peace, he prayeth that *the Lord of peace himself*, who alone createth and entertaineth peace in his Churches borders, *Psal. 147. 14.* might give them peace, that is both a peaceable frame of spirit desirous of peace, *Job 3. 15.* and the blessing of peace or harmonious walking together in Christian society, *Psal. 29. 11.* and this, *alwayes*, that is, a lasting, solid and continuing peace, and *by all means*, to wit, a peace, whereof though God be the only Author, yet they were to seek after it, by all means lawfull and the utmost of their fervent endeavours, for by praying for it *by all means* he doth indirectly point at their duty to seek after it *by all means*. Secondly, He prayeth, that in order to this and to other ends, *God might be with them*

*them all*, by his gracious preſence and ſweet influences of his ſpirit for aſſiſting them with ſtrength, direction and courage to go on in the way of their duty againſt all oppoſition, *Rom. 8. 31. Doct. 1.* A Miniſter, who would have his preaching bleſſed with ſucceſs among a people, muſt be much in prayer to God for his gracious preſence and powerful concurrence. He muſt begin with prayer, he muſt end with prayer, yea and all along his work he muſt now and then dart up a fervent deſire to God for that end: for, *Paul* began this Epiſtle with prayer, *chap. 1. 2.* he prayed ſeveral times in his paſſing through it, *chap. 1. 11.* and *2. 16.* and *3. 5.* and now he doth conclude it with prayer. *Now the Lord of peace himſelf give you peace alwayes.* 2. We ſhould labour to give ſuch ſtiles to God in prayer as are moſt ſuitable to our preſent ſuit, and may furniſh us with a ground of confidence that we ſhall be heard in what we aſk; for, while *Paul* ſuiteth for peace from God, he calleth him *the Lord of peace.* 3. As there are oftentimes ground of fear leſt alienation of minds, ſchiſmes, rents and heart-burnings may poſſibly follow within a Church, upon their impartial exerciſe of diſcipline and inflicting of the higheſt cenſure; So the Lords ſervants ought not to ſurceaſe upon the meer poſſibility or appearance of ſuch hazard, but are to do their duty, and deal with God the more earneſtly for preventing any feared inconvenience of that kind: for, *Paul* projecting that the exerciſe of diſcipline might breed ſome diſturbance to the Churches peace, doth not bid them deſiſt, but pray-  
e.h, *now the Lord of peace himſelf give you peace alwayes.*

*always.* 4. As peace and harmony among Christian societies is with great difficulty attained and preserved, and is no less than a singular work of God, considering our own averseness from it, *Rom.* 3. 17. and Satans enmity to it, *Jeh.* 8. 44. So that peace only is to be regarded whereof the Lord is the bestower and approver: a peace that is not prejudicial to truth and holiness, *Heb.* 12. 14. but only curbeth and restraineth our sinful and turbulent humours, *2 Cor.* 12. 20. for, he prayeth for such a peace, while he seeketh peace from God, and sheweth it cannot be had but from him, while he saith, *the Lord of peace himself give you peace.* 5. Though peace among Christians be a special work of God (see *doct.* 4.) and therefore to be sought from him; yet our prayers of that kind should be seconded by our own serious endeavours and all lawful means assayed for that end, so, as that we not only carefully eschew whatever may on our part give cause of renting, *1 Cor.* 8. 13. but also be not easily provoked, when cause of renting is given by others, *1 Cor.* 13. 5. and that, when a rent is made, we spare no pains, nor stand upon any thing, which is properly our own, for having it removed, *Gen.* 13. 8, 9. and do not weary to follow after peace, when it seemeth to fly from us, *Heb.* 12. 14. and all our endeavours have but small appearance of present success, *2 Cor.* 12. 15. for, while he seeketh peace from God by all means, he doth indirectly incite them to seek after it by all means. 6. The peace and concord which should be sought after among Christians is not an outside agreement only, *Psal.* 55. 21. nor a  
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meer cessation from debate and strife for a time, until either party see an offered advantage, but a lasting, solid and continuing peace; and therefore an union in hearts and affections, *Phil. 2. 2.* which being once united, are not easily rent asunder, *1 Sam. 18. 1.* with *19. 2.* an union in truth not in error, *Isa. 8. 12.* so that neither party may have reason to repent their entering it; And an union not in a carnal but a spiritual interest, even that they may strive together for the faith of the Gospel, *Phil. 1. 27.* for, he prayeth *the Lord to give them peace alwayes*, that is, a lasting solid peace.

7. As the Lords gracious presence with his people in any plentiful measure is annexed to their peaceable frame of spirit, and serious endeavours after peace and concord among themselves: and as their implacable renting humours do grieve the Lords spirit, and provoke him to withdraw from them: So sound peace and concord among societies doth much depend upon the Lords gracious presence, which where it is, doth not a little quiet and put to silence our renting and dividing humours. Neither can there be any sound or solid peace but among the people with whom God is: for, the grant of those two petitions seem here presented as mutually depending upon one another: *The Lord give you peace alwayes, and the Lord be with you all.*

454 *A brief Exposition of the second Epistle*

Ver. 17. *The salutation of Paul with mine own hand, which is the token in every Epistle : so I write.*

Before he conclude with his usual farewell with, v. 18. he doth here premit a Preface to it, wherein, having called the following with his *salutation*, that is, an expression and testimony of his good will and affection, he shews he did write it with his *own hand* and that it was his use so to do at the close of *every Epistle* which did serve as a *token*, or certain mark, whereby his own Epistles might be distinguished from all others forged and feigned in his name, and he hints at the reason why it was such a differing mark, to wit, because his way of writing was alwayes uniform, and hardly could be undiscernably counterfeited by any other, which is implied, while he saith, *So I write.*

*Doth. 1.* The sending of salutations by word or writ, that we may thereby testifie our continuing affection to absent friends, is not a matter of common courtesie and good manners only, but a duty to be performed for conscience sake, as tending to entertain love and good will among Christians ; for, while *Paul* doth never omit to send his salutation, it evidently appeareth he did not look upon it as a matter of complement but of conscience.

*The salutation of Paul.* 2. Our salutation, whether of present or absent friends, should express our wishes to God for things spiritual and the choicest mercies to be bestowed on them, wherein we ought to be real, hearty and affectionate, and not

not formal, or acted from the force of custom only: for, he calleth his farewell-wish, v. 18. to which he annexeth an hearty *Amen*, his salutation. *The salutation of Paul.* 3. It hath been an ancient slight of Satan, and of his instruments to thrust upon the Church (so far as in them did lye) false and forged writings, and give them out for Canonick Scripture, thereby to make the truth and authority of all Scripture questionable; for, to prevent such impostures, Paul did write his *salutation with his own hand which is the token in every Epistle*, saith he. 4. That God hath sufficiently provided in his Word against the forementioned evil: see upon Col. 4. v. 18. *which is the token in every Epistle, so I write.*

Ver. 18. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you all. Amen.*

Resteth the very thing, which he did so write, with which he shuts up the Epistle, to wit, his hearty with that the free and undeserved favour of God in Christ, with all the fruits and tokens of it, might be conveyed unto them *all* without exception, to which he affixeth his *Amen*, signifying *Let it be so*, and it shall be so, in testimony both of his fervent desire and confidence. *Doct. 1.* Whatever be the eminence of a person or persons, for their inherent graces and gracious qualifications; yet it is only Gods free-grace and undeserved favour, and not their own merit, which must be relied on for closing their accounts, or for obtaining any spiritual or temporal mercy at the hands of God: for, though



though he commended them highly for their patience, faith, love, and other graces, *chap. 1. 3, 4.* yet he closeth all by wishing Gods free grace and favour to them, as the fountain-cause of all things they stood in need of or could expect. *The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you: 2.* As there is an inexhaustible fountain of free grace in God, which can water all, without exception of any, and will extend it self to as many as he seeth fit, *Rom. 9. 18.* So the more of it we wish unto, or, is according to our wish bestowed upon others, there doth not the less remain behind unto our selves: for *Paul*, who wisheth grace and favour to them all, had received a very large measure of it himself, and knew that how large a measure soever was bestowed upon them, there would not be the less for him. Therefore doth he thus close, *The grace, &c.*

### The Postscript.

*The second Epistle to the Thessalonians, was written from Athens.*

The truth of this Postscript is no less suspected than the former; and this Epistle judged more probably to have been written also from *Corinth*; where *Paul* continued a year and an half after he came from *Athens*, *Act. 18. 1.* with *II.* See upon the Postscript of the first Epistle.

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